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ESSAYS

ON

ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES

OF

CHRIST;

OR, THE

Economy of the Gospel Dispensation

AS EXHIBITED IN THE

PERSON, CHARACTER, AND OFFICES

OF

THE REDEEMER.

BY THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM GOODE, M. A.

RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF ST. ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE
AND ST. ANN BLACKFRIARS, &c. &c. &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

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SEVENTH SERIES.

ESSAY I.

Jesse — Root of David.

THOUGH the blessed Redeemer condescended to become the Son of David according to the flesh, yet it is evident that he possessed a more exalted dignity, and holds in the Scripture of truth a much higher character. This might appear illustrious in the language of prophecy, when the house of David was upon the throne, but would, even in its greatest glory, have been to Him an act of unspeakable humiliation. But when He appeared upon earth, the house of David had lost its royal dignity; and though born in the royal city, yet even there he is so unknown and unnoticed, as to be cast out and laid in a manger. He, however, who thus appears unknown as the descendant of David, assumes a name which can never be misunderstood; and assures us, that though the offspring, he is also the **ROOT OF DAVID**. Nothing can more evidently imply a claim of Divine power and Godhead than such a title as this; for he from whom David derived his existence and his glories can be no other than the Source of all things. We must, therefore, consider this as a character implying the essential Divinity of the Son of David. Indeed, the testimonies to this point are so various and so clear, and without it many Scriptures would be so unintelligible, and all the meaning of the most glorious descriptions reduced to nothing, or lowered down in the most unreasonable manner, that it is evident, to render all consistent, the SON OF

DAVID AFTER THE FLESH, must be acknowledged to be
 “GOD OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER.”

While many seem to receive an unaccountable gratification in whatever may give them an important opportunity of disproving this great and fundamental article in the system of redemption, the humble believer will rejoice in the fulness of the Divine testimony, and in every thing which tends further to prove this important point ; for such a Saviour can alone suit his wants, or satisfy the anxious fears of his soul. As the consideration of this title of the Redeemer will tend to establish his faith, it will therefore meet the sentiment and feeling of his mind, which loves to hear the praise, and exalt the glories, of his Lord.

The Root of David no doubt implies, that he is the *Source of David's existence*, the Author of his life and being. But he who is the Author of life, must himself be the Life itself ; and therefore he says, “I am THE LIFE,” the Principle of life, the Self-existent, deriving life from nothing without myself, but possessing it underrived essentially and inherent ; yea, I am myself the very Life, which is not so much a property in me as it is myself, and which I do not so much possess, but am. As life, therefore, in the order of nature, proceeds from the root, so all existence proceeds from him. He spake, and it was done : at his command the being of nature sprang into existence out of nothing ; by the same operative will it continues to arise ; and, still dependant upon his word, he carries on all the order of nature, in the system of the universe. Thus says the Psalmist (xxxiii. 6) ; “By the Word of Jehovah were the heavens made ; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” We can have no doubt that by the Word of the Lord, the Psalmist here meant the same as John i. 3 ; that Word of the Lord which was in the beginning, which was with God and was God ; by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made which is made ; in whom was life, and the life was the light of men. So the Apostle describes him in his creating energies and operations : “By him all things

were created, whether visible or invisible ; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers : all things were created by him, and for him." (Col. i. 16.) This is our Jesus, our Redeemer and Saviour : we cannot, then, entertain a single doubt of his own eternal self-existent glories : thus only can he be the Root of David, as he is the Source of his existence ; and if of his, then of all created beings. He cannot be a mere man who was existent before he came into the world, as the Root of David, or as David's Lord (Psal. cx.) : nor can he be a mere creature of any description ; even the highest order of angelic intelligences, when he is the Fountain of existence to all created beings. True, in his human nature, he was the Branch of David, growing out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness ; and, when we should see him, no beauty that we should desire him. But in his Divine nature he is the Root, from which his human nature and the original of his human nature spring. Let us adore, then, and worship him who was once like us, born of the family of David, as David's Lord, as my Lord, as God over all, as possessing no derived divinity—all being having its origin from him—but as the *I am*, Jehovah.

When he calls himself the *Root of David*, he no doubt meant to imply, that he was the Origin and Source of *all his faculties and excellencies* ; that whatever was admirable in his character, and in which he excelled others around him, or the rest of mankind at large, was derived from him from whom he had derived his existence. The blessed Jesus is the Archetype of all glory and perfections. Whatever excellency there is, or can be, in any creature, whether natural, moral, or spiritual, is in Him—has its spring and origin in him : they reside altogether in one assemblage of beauty in Him, who is therefore altogether lovely. Let us accustom ourselves to contemplate him in this light : whatever excellencies I admire simply in others, are concentrated and combined in him, in absolute and eternal perfection.

What we call the gifts of nature, are but the faculties

and endowments which, by his Spirit of wisdom and power, he himself communicates to his creatures, and which he dispenses according to his sovereign pleasure. From the faint ray of intellect in an almost idiot, to the soaring mind of a philosophic Newton, or the vast immortal powers of the brightest seraphim, all comes from him in the degree his sovereign will hath appointed. If, then, we consider David, in his wisdom and understanding, and his superior abilities; the intellectual furniture of his mind; his perception and judgment, his memory, imagination, and ingenuity; the exalted genius displayed in the sublime composition of his Psalms; it was from this Fountain that he derived them all. Or, if we contemplate him in his natural strength as a man of war, prevailing against the lion and the bear; or going forth against the uncircumcised Philistine; it was he who taught his hands to war, and girded him with strength. (Psal. xviii. 32—34.) He was the Root of all his moral excellences. And here let us turn aside, or cast a veil over the awful declension which affecteth the character of this man after God's own heart. This, indeed, arose, not from his connection with Christ; but shews the weakness and disorder of human nature, and the entire dependance of the best of saints upon the Saviour of sinners. But let us contemplate him in his upright conduct toward Saul, his generosity and kindness to Jonathan and his family, his disinterested friendship, and his upright conduct in his government of his kingdom: these were from his connection with him who was the Righteous One, who chose David his servant, and took him from the sheep-fold, &c., to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance; so that he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands. (Psal. lxxviii. 70—72.) But if we contemplate the spiritual excellences of his character, what had he that he had not received? If we behold him in the exercise of grace, mourning over sin, or aspiring, with earnest desires after God, as the hart panting for the water-brook, so panting for the Divine presence and glory;—if we view

and catch the sacred ardour as we view his faith, his animated glow and devotion; his adoration, his prayers, his praises; whence had he derived these spiritual gifts, but from the Fountain of all wisdom and grace. He himself, the humiliating and beautiful pattern of a devout heart, will tell us whence he derived the whole: "All my fresh springs are in thee," Jehovah Jesus, the Highest, hereafter to be the Man, the Man born in Sion, the Redeemer of Israel. (Psal. lxxxvii.)

Our Lord has beautifully represented this to the actual experience of all his people, when describing himself as the Vine, of which they are the fruitful branches; separate from, or without whom, they can do nothing; but in whom they bring forth fruit abundantly. We can no more live spiritually or become spiritually fruitful without him, than a branch can live and bring forth fruit, separated from its parent stock. All his people, therefore, are ingrafted into him, as they were placed in him by the purpose of his eternal love, chosen in Christ Jesus; and chosen by him (John xv. 16), they were eternally united to him in a covenant relation; and when his Spirit, communicated from himself, comes into their heart, they become really and experimentally united, and are thus actually quickened and made alive to God. They therefore live by him, and then live upon him; and that faith which he communicates is the mean of preserving that union, or of deriving the constant and fresh communications of pardoning, quickening, and sanctifying grace. And as the Root, he is the Fountain of constant supply, and ought to be their entire and constant dependance. To him they must look for all, in pardon, grace, consolation, and salvation, as the propitiation, through faith in his blood; from him to receive the pardon of all their iniquities, as the Lord their righteousness: through faith in him they are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses; as the Fountain of wisdom, to him they look for guidance and direction; as the Root of sanctifying influence, from him they receive all grace, and all the quickening of grace, all

the fruitfulness of grace, and all the consolation of grace ; and as their redemption, in him they triumph over every corruption and spiritual enemy, and expect the eternal victory and the song of triumph. “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” If then, all this be derived from him, those who are not looking to him for them, nor united with him, must remain destitute of them : and without a constant believing application, a sinner can have no sense of pardon ; no continued sense of it can be preserved in the heart of the believer ; no grace, no sanctifying virtue, no spiritual strength, can be enjoyed, and no consolation enliven and satisfy the mind. Faith alone brings it into experience : and when faith is low, the communication and the consolation must be small ; the strength fails, grace declines, spiritual ardour abates ; there is no enlargement of heart, nor any activity in duty. But “ he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall ; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength : they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” Believer, quicken thy supplication ; press close to the side, or rather by faith cleave, to the Lord thy Saviour ; then shalt thou have experience of his abundant fulness : the prayer of faith shall receive abundantly from the Fountain, from the Root of David. There thy life is hid with Christ in God ; there it is secured, not to be injured by all the stormy blasts of life, which may nip the branches, check the growth, and injure the fertility ; but shall not, cannot destroy the inestimable Root, to which thou art united. Let faith realize the security, and give him the glory : and to bring it into sweeter, richer experience, “ Lord, increase our faith.”

As the Root of David, he is exhibited as *the Source or Origin of David's authority and government* ; yea, of all the powers of earth.—David is frequently mentioned as a

man of remarkable honour ; his victories were great ; his triumphs over the enemies of Israel were complete ; his throne established in righteousness and judgment, and his power absolute and uncontrollable. As such, he was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, however honourable it might be to others to be the son of such a father, his humiliation is described by his being the Son of David. David himself therefore calls him Lord, though he was *yet his Son* ; and such is his design when he claims the superior dignity of being the *Root of David*. Yea, he is the Lord of lords and King of kings : he is the Lord of all, and Head over all things. In his divine government, he is the Source of all power and authority ; not only the Fountain and Source of all the glory and felicity of the kingdom of David, but of all government ; “ By me,” says he, “ kings reign, and princes decree justice : by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.” (Prov. viii. 15, 16.) The constituted dominions and potentates on earth, derive their sanction and their authority from him : the powers which be are ordained by him, and therefore he demands the subjection and obedience of all their subjects. His mediatorial kingdom is the most perfect pattern for their imitation ; the model of good government, not for its own gratification, but the welfare of the people, the destruction of the oppressor, the protection of the needy, and the happiness of all. (See Ps. lxxii ; Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.) How salutary would be the fruit of legal government, if thus conducted ; the emblem of his own glorious kingdom, where He reigns in eternal power, and dispenses eternal security and eternal blessings on all his subjects, in eternal glory!--How illustrious is thy person, how righteous and glorious thy kingdom, thou Root and Son of David ! While in this name we trace thy glory, we behold in it the most suitable discovery of blessedness and consolation to thy church, which glories in having such a Friend and such a Saviour. Now, then, let faith arise, and contemplate the glories of his person ; and as such, his all-sufficiency to complete the work of redemption, and bring all

his people through to the full enjoyment of its blessings. If he be the Root of David, he must be the Source of all he was, and of all he enjoyed; and if such to him, he is able to be the same to us, till the weak become as David. Yes, he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Adored, then, be that love which led him, who is so able to accomplish, to undertake the work of our salvation. When he saw that there was none to help, he engaged his heart to approach unto God for us; then our help was laid upon this Mighty One by the will of the Father, and this Arm of Jehovah is revealed. When, therefore, he bids sinners to look to him for salvation, he rests his claim for confidence upon his Godhead; “For I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa. xlv. 22.) This is the ground which his church takes, when triumphing in his salvation: “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isa. xii. 2): and all nature is called to rejoice in the fact, that “the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” (Isa. xlv. 23.)

From hence is derived the virtue of his atonement, the merit of his righteousness, the prevalence of his intercession, the power and eternity of his government, and the immutability of his love. Contemplate, my soul, this wonder of redemption, this mystery of godliness. Is it Jehovah who becomes my Jesus? Yes: he bore the name, because he is Immanuel, God with us. I cannot then doubt of his love to perishing sinners, when for such, and when we were such, he himself undertook the work of our redemption: I cannot doubt but that such a person hath completed the work, and hath now in himself the all-sufficiency of power and glorious blessings, to complete his design of grace toward them.

When I bring my guilty soul to him for pardon and salvation; and when I rest my soul upon him, as the sure Foundation laid in Sion, the Name given amongst men for their salvation, why should I fear lest he should reject

my trembling soul? Can any sin, any accumulation of guilt, be too great for that love; or any corruption be too powerful for that Almighty Saviour? No: his cross proclaims his love unspeakable and unbounded! But if his cross and death are the sure pledge of pardoning mercy, his resurrection and glory secure its application. I am told he rose again for our justification; that he ever liveth to intercede in our behalf,—and him the Father heareth always; that, as our Forerunner, he is for us entered within the vail, glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Oh, gracious Advocate! plead our cause: then shall we appear with acceptance, when we bring our persons or our services, and at last we shall stand complete in thee. There this Root of the royal authority of David is exalted Head over all things to his church, with all power in heaven and in earth; the God-man upon the throne, to give eternal life to as many as were given him. There he fulfils all his designs of love; and there he realizes all his delightful characters, which are not empty titles, and names of honour, but names of design and of ability. When he styled himself the Root of David, his design was to confirm the confidence of his church in his ability to carry on the plan of salvation, to confirm his promises and declaration of grace to them, and to shew his truth and his ability to perform them. I have sent mine angel, says he, to testify of these things in the church; and I have power to accomplish and confirm his testimony, for I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star: therefore “the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come, and take of the water of life freely.” Let, therefore, the convinced sinner and the trembling believer take courage from the consideration of the love and the designs of the Redeemer, and of his almighty power to accomplish those designs of love. What a glorious object of faith and confidence! We are not straitened in him, but in ourselves: let him possess our trust and unshaken

reliance, for all we need of pardoning mercy, directing wisdom, and preserving power: but let us recollect, that while he deserves our reliance, he also claims our obedience and submission. As the powers which he are ordained by him, and there is no power but of him, he would have us submit to them, even as to him, seeing they derive their claim of obedience from him, that we may do all things as unto the Lord. But to him who is the Root of David, the King of kings and Lord of lords, we are bound to unreserved obedience: his people are willing in the day of his power, and thus become his obedient subjects; and if we would not have him to reign over us, we must expect to hear from his throne that awful sentence, “As for these, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.” Let us not be amongst these enemies of the Lord, nor deceive ourselves with a vain profession, calling him Lord, Lord, when we do not the things which he says; for not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of his Father which is in heaven. He requires our faith and love, the submission of our understandings to his truth, of our will to his providence, and of all our powers to his commands; and if our hearts are right with him, it will be our delight to do the will of our Saviour and our Prince.

To him also are due all our acknowledgments of gratitude for all we have, and all we enjoy, in nature and in grace; even to that blessed Jesus, who hath all excellency undivided and original in himself, and is the root of all, to all his people. What have we that we have not received? Who hath made us to differ? All, all excellency is in him, as the Archetype or Fountain: all that is excellent is derived from him: but in him is greatly more to give than we can need; for “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us.”

The mediatorial right of bestowing has been purchased

indeed by him, but at the price of his sufferings, his blood, and death: thus alone could means be devised to bestow the blessing which eternal grace designed; in a way honourable to God, and consistent with his justice and his truth. The right, therefore, of bestowing eternal life was the gift of the Father, in consequence of the fulfilment of his mediatorial undertaking; and here we rest our hope: but while we view the dying Saviour as the Offspring of David, we adore the triumphant and reigning Saviour as the Root of David; nor will we fear to worship and adore. Angels do the same, as they surround the throne above: and let him, therefore, possess our reverence, love, and praise, the worship of our hearts, the praises of our tongues. We honour the Son even as we honour the Father, in obedience to the Divine command, and ascribe to him all the honour of all the work and blessings of salvation, and say with the surrounding hosts, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Amen, and Amen.

ESSAY II.

Bishop of Souls.

THE nature, the extent, and the power of the Episcopal office, have been the occasion of much controversy and contention, in the church of Christ: but had the office been always filled with characters suitable to its design, with men of a spirit and conduct becoming its nature and its duties, these controversies would have been much lessened, if they had not been entirely prevented. In the earlier ages of the church, it was no doubt occupied by men of the highest repute and veneration for their faith, their purity, and their zeal; so that the characters of the men appear to have upholden the true dignity of the office; in the same proportion as the office conferred dignity and authority upon them. The word Bishop, literally rendered, is an overseer, or superintendant, and might be applied to every pastor of a separate church, in its more general acceptance; but it appears to have been specially applied, in a more extensive sense, and to have been the proper application of one who exercised an episcopal jurisdiction, not over the people of a single congregation, but over the pastors themselves of several congregations within a certain, though at first but a limited, extent; and who, in conjunction with them, and as superior among them, had the power of directing the external concerns of the church, appointing and ordaining those inferior pastors, presiding in all their deliberations, and executing the determinations, laws, and regulations of the counsels of the church, for the management of its general concerns. The design and nature of the Episcopal office, is a subject, however, too extensive for our present consideration. If we merely take

for granted the foregoing observations, it will be sufficient for our purpose; for whatever its dignity or duties are, whether to be taken in a larger or a more restricted sense, all will acknowledge that these belong most eminently to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are most comprehensively fulfilled in him. He is the true Head of the church, to take the care and charge of all its concerns, and all its offices: its gifts and graces are in his hand to communicate. Whatever the character implies, whatever its utility and benefits may be, when truly borne and properly directed, we shall find in Him the most honourable character which ever filled the high and important office. Primitive dignity and simplicity will fall infinitely short of Him who is the great Shepherd, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, with supreme authority, infinite ability, consummate wisdom, the kindest condescension and highest benevolence, to execute the office, and secure the benefit of his universal church, in heaven and in earth. If we consider the character which the Scripture requires for the office, and the nature, duties and benefits of the office itself,—these will give us another view of the excellency and suitableness of our Jesus, and of the security and happiness of his church, the true, the spiritual church, of which he is the spiritual Head, the wise Superintendant, the powerful Governor, and the eternal Defender.

It is evident, from the scriptural account, as well as the general history of the primitive church, that not every person was considered proper for, nor suffered to sustain, this important office; for it is plain, that there was vested somewhere, both as to the priestly and the episcopal office, a power of choice and of selection. The primitive church knew nothing of ministers self-sent, and self-ordained. The character of the persons who were suitable to be admitted to the important trust is beautifully drawn by the Apostle in several places: and there would be little dispute about the office, nor could the office itself be despised, or sink into disrepute, were it in the main filled with men of the character there described. But as every office, in

every department, however excellent in itself, must depend, for its proper administration, upon the integrity and suitability of those by whom it is sustained ; such especially must be the case in the high, important, and spiritual office of the church.

A high degree of integrity, strength of faith, simplicity and purity of conduct, spiritual wisdom and experience in the ways of God, diligence and activity, love, patience, meekness and temperance, aptitude to teach, diligence in preaching the word of salvation, kindness and hospitality through the love of the church, and of those who, as its faithful ministers, are promoting its interests, with a great love to the truth of God, and a firm adherence to it, constitute that assemblage of virtue which the Apostle marks out as suitable to form the character of the Christian bishop. (See and compare 1 Tim. iii. 2—7 ; vi. 11, 12 : 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2 ; Tit. i. 7—9, &c.) But the most upright, wise, and holy characters upon earth are but as feeble stars before the meridian sun, when brought into comparison with the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. They are, therefore, represented as stars in his hand : He himself, as described in his Gospel, is, by way of superior eminence, represented as the Bright and Morning Star, and as in himself the glorious Sun of Righteousness. In him the character is complete : he is holy, harmless, separate from sinners ; who is made higher than the heavens ; the High Priest of our profession. In his hands the administration of his church shall be conducted with the most perfect wisdom, the tenderest love, the most consummate righteousness, and the most unceasing regard and attention to its eternal benefits.

Let us, then, take a view of the various duties of the office, and contemplate him in the fulfilment of them. The various duties belonging to this office bear a great similarity to those which are attached to the character of the Shepherd ; it implies the same love and affection, the same concern and diligent care, and the same attention to the provision of the flock : and though the pastoral office is now less strictly

fulfilled, so that in these relaxed times it is impossible to exercise many of its more peculiar and personal duties in many places; yet there are some which can never be dispensed with.

Thus it is the duty of the bishop,

1. *To feed the church*, or, to take care that her members be fed with wholesome doctrine, in the pastures of truth and grace, and with the bread of life, Christ Jesus.—This indeed is the duty of every pastor who is so far an *επισκοπος* over his own charge; but especially of those whose official situation places them over others, to observe and enforce the performance of their duties. “Hold fast the form of sound words,” says the Apostle to one thus constituted under himself, “which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. i. 13, 14.) “Neglect not the gift that is in thee: take heed unto thyself and to thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (1 Tim. iv. 14—16.) Thus to his beloved Timothy, when placed over the church of Ephesus, he gave this solemn exhortation, charging him, as in the sight of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom, to preach the Word; to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Such were the duties prescribed to the zeal of the primitive Christian bishops; and such was a Timothy, a Titus, a Cyprian, a Chrysostom, and an Augustine—men exalted by wisdom, spirituality, and zeal for the glory of God and the good of the church of Christ. How serious, how important, a business is the care of souls! as in the sight of God, and in the expectation of his judgment, to take the charge of Christ’s flock, to feed them with wisdom and understanding, in the truth of God! Feed my sheep, feed my lambs, was his last charge to the first and highest officer of his church; and is still addressed to their successors in their office and ministry. We, indeed, can only feed them with the word of truth: but He is himself

the Truth ; he came to bear witness of the truth. He provides the rich repast for the spiritual life and consolation of souls : by his Spirit he can apply it effectually to the heart, when his people sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruits are sweet to their taste. Then he feeds them with the power of truth ; with all the rich blessings connected with it ; and thus fulfils the character in its most exalted and most effective sense. (John x. 9, &c.) In the diligent discharge of their office, let his servants ever remember their entire dependence upon him ; and that, in the preaching of his word, and in the administration of his ordinances, He alone can give the efficacy, and render them effectual for the instruction, refreshment, and spiritual health of the soul, who is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

It is the duty of the episcopal office,

2. *To watch over the interests of the church*, and to protect it from the false doctrine, or the destructive designs, of its enemies ; and therefore our bishops are wisely placed, by the civil power, in a situation to watch over her interests, in the first great council of the nation.—The episcopal and the ministerial office is beautifully represented under the similar character of a shepherd (John x. 12—14) ; and the most awful denunciations are uttered upon the careless and the unfaithful. (Ezek. xxxiv. 8—11.) But though men who bear the office may be careless and unfaithful, He who is the supreme Shepherd will still be attentive to his people, and faithful to his charge : He will save his flock, and judge between cattle and cattle : He will feed them, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness. (See ver. 22—31.) Christ Jesus will ever have a people, a church, in the world : and as long as they are in the world, their interests shall be near his heart ; his wisdom, his love, his power, and all his Divine attributes stand engaged for their preservation, and the destruction of their enemies. He has entered on the task, and hath made it his very office to defend them from all their enemies ; and what he hath engaged for, he is faithful to

perform, and will certainly perform. The gates of hell may assault, but the gates of hell shall never prevail against them: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." The inferior bishops may defend her from those who would injure her discipline, throw into confusion her outward order, which forms her extraordinary beauty and glory, debase her doctrine or the purity of her worship; but what an Almighty Friend is this, who can defend her members collectively and individually from all spiritual as well as temporal, from all inward as well as outward, enemies to their purity or holy bliss? Here is the only, here is the sufficient security of the church of Christ. If we look back and survey the past history of the church, and contemplate the storms of persecution which she has weathered, how often, when her enemies have prematurely anticipated their triumph, and her friends have wept over her as fallen and destroyed,—how often has she risen again, as it were from her ashes, to glory and renown! To what can we ascribe the continuance of her existence in the earth, and the revival of her power and glory, but to the care of him who is the Head of his church, and the Head over all things to his church, and who hath all power in heaven and in earth to complete the designs of his everlasting love? Yes, infidelity may again rage and threaten; it may seem to triumph for a time; but all its attempts shall issue like its former attempts, all its triumphs shall terminate as its former triumphs, in its own confusion, in the further spread of the Gospel, the extension of the church, and the glory of her Guardian and her Lord. How safe and secure are the interests of the church of Christ, when they are all thus supremely in his hands; when he, whatever may be its outward order in the different nations of Christendom, himself rules supremely in and over all!

Here we behold, indeed, the universal Bishop, the infallible Head; a name of blasphemy when attributed to a weak and erring mortal, but a name which it would be blasphemy to deny to him. In his omniscience, all things are

naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. In his infinite wisdom, he cannot mistake what is right in the direction and government of his universal church, or in the conduct of any one of the affairs of any one of its members: not one person, not one enemy, can prevail to its destruction. We need not trouble ourselves about the security or the interest of his church, but with perfect satisfaction and ease leave it in his hands: whatever inferior interests connected with his church may fail, whatever church may decline, or whatever corrupt church may be destroyed, he will have a church in the world to the end of time. That church shall stand, yea, shall be refined by all its trials and persecutions; and whatever enemies may rage, or whatever may be the rage of enemies, “He that sitteth in heaven will laugh; the Lord will have them in derision;” and yet exalt his kingdom and extend his throne. (Psa. ii.)

His ever-present eye, his ever-constant care, his never-failing power, are the security of his church; and by these he maintains its glory and honour, and will cause it to be honoured throughout the earth. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness, &c. God is known in her palaces for a refuge; her enemies shall flee before his manifested glory; and God will establish it for ever. Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even unto death. (See Psa. xlviii.)

3. It is the office of the bishop *to manage, govern, and set in order the internal affairs of the church.* Thus Titus was left in Crete, that he might set in order the things which were wanting. (Titus i. 5.) None, indeed, can appoint the sacraments of his church but himself: since it is his command and power that gave them their authority in his church, these must be ordained by Christ himself. It is, therefore, dangerous and unlawful to multiply the Christian sacraments, as the Papists have done, to answer their own secular purposes; or to refuse submission to his

authority in those he himself hath appointed, as the Quakers do. But we acknowledge (and it seems necessary for the existence of every society, that such a power should be lodged within itself) that the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies; and that whatever seems proper for the external management of its domestic affairs, may be left to the discretion of its external rulers. This power may no doubt be abused, as it is in the papal hierarchy, yet must be, and really is, exercised in every well-ordered society of Christians. But the great Lord of the church, by his providence and by his Spirit, hath undertaken not only its defence from its outward, inward, and spiritual enemies, but to manage all the concerns of his church, and to make it prosperous and happy. Bishops and pastors are but instruments in his hands: and he arranges, disposes, and places them as may best subserve the general interest, and with a wisdom and economy far beyond our present comprehension to perceive. He hath constituted his church, like the various members of the same body, in their different orders, for the benefit of the whole; and communicates the different gifts and graces suited to the different orders, offices, and situations to which each is appointed. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all and in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal: to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (1 Cor. xii. 4—11.)

If we could behold the different parts and different instruments in the church in this view, we should discern an admirable wisdom, a beautiful proportion, through the

whole: we should see that every part was necessary to the great and universal plan: and as the head is the highest, the eyes the wisest, the hands most fit for action, the feet for walking, so the gifts of the various instruments he employs are wisely suited to the place they hold; nor could they be otherwise than they are, without injuring the general order of the whole: the refinement of eloquence in one, and the plain, simple, and blunt sincerity of another, may both be essential for the different departments of usefulness assigned to each. And in this view we should not extol one to the prejudice of another, nor despise those instruments which, though not to our taste, may be most calculated for usefulness in another line, or in some other part of the heavenly vineyard. And perhaps there is nothing, in the ultimately summing up of all things, which will more display his manifold wisdom (Ephes. iii. 10) than these diversities of ability, gifts, talents, and the different manner in which they are exercised in the church of Christ. Hence He alone,

4. *Can send, appoint, commission, and prepare suitable pastors and inferior ministers of his church.*—This is peculiarly the charge of the *episcopal office*, and was so exercised in the primitive church; to ordain elders, and (Titus i. 5.) to commit the care of the church to faithful men, who should be able to teach others. (2 Tim. ii. 2.) But though the outward appointment and designation is committed into the hands of the bishops of his church, yet to Him they are accountable; and He alone it is that can prepare and furnish for the sacred charge. It is He that incites their ardour for the work, and leads them, by the secret directions of his providence and influence of his Spirit, to undertake the important charge. It is, therefore, spoken of as the great work and peculiar office of the ascended Redeemer, when he had received gifts for men, to prepare the officers of his church, to give some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. (Ephes. iv. 11—13.) Candidates for the ministry are therefore required to profess that they believe them-

elves moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that office; and none but such are of his sending, or can expect his blessing.

But as there must be an order and consistency in all his ways, and as he cannot be at a loss to accomplish his designs, it may be fairly inferred, that where he calls by his Spirit, he will open a way in his providence, that the inward call and the outward opportunity shall finally concur; and that there can be no need of violating the direct order of the church, under the idea of an inward impulse to assume the sacred office. And though in any church, there may be intruders into that office; and though he may overrule the violation of order, for the benefit of his church; such a display of his power and goodness can never justify us in the violation of any established order, designed for the peace, prosperity, and welfare of the church; and as every office in his church derives its authority from him, the Lord of order, he has a right to be obeyed. After attending to the outward order of the church, it is of the first consequence, as to a minister himself, to be satisfied that he is sent and qualified of Him, if he desire to fulfil his office, or to receive his blessing, or to promote the welfare of the church. He may indeed, if he please, commission a Judas to be an Apostle, and may in his providence permit the outward authority in his church to be conducted by those who are themselves destitute of his grace; nor can the spiritual state of the pastor affect or injure the efficacy of the ordinances administered by him; but awful will be the state of such an ignorant and unqualified minister of the sanctuary, and dreadful the account he will be called to give, in the great day of the Lord. But his great design is, what ought to be the obedience of all his ministering servants in his church,

5. *To promote the spiritual welfare of all its members, by all suitable means of reproof, instruction, and consolation. The peculiar design of the ministerial office is the collecting and edifying the church of Christ.*

Hence the minister of Christ is called to rebuke the un-

ruly, to confirm the wavering, to restore the wanderer, to gain over the transgressor, to strengthen the weak, and establish the believing. This he is to do *with vigilance, with zeal, with tenderness and love, with constancy and perseverance* (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4, 24, 25); and that, not as a lord over God's heritage, but as an example to the flock. These are to be the objects of his peculiar study; while all his study, his cares and employments, are to be directed to this end, "Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them (*ισθι εν τιστοις*, be in them); for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 15, 16.)

The very duty of his office is by all means to endeavour to bring sinners to Christ; to encourage, to warn, to animate, to strengthen, to edify, to preserve the flock. Our church, therefore, solemnly charges its priests to this effect: "As much as lieth in you, apply yourselves wholly to this one thing: draw all your cares, and study this way, and pray for the assistance of the Spirit for this purpose*." What a serious engagement; what an important work! but whoever is unfaithful to the trust, the blessed Jesus, the great Bishop of souls, will never be unfaithful. While he provides by his providence and Spirit, the means and instruments for the preservation of his church, he himself sits above all, and means and instruments are in his hands: He will complete his design and engagement; and the spiritual welfare of his church shall be effected by his grace and blessing. In every means, in every ordinance, under whatever ministry, as the authority is his, the spiritual instruction and the effectual blessing come from him; and however excellent and honourable the means, the excellency of the power is of God, and not of them. Not that we are able, as an Apostle assures us, to think any thing of ourselves; all our sufficiency is of God: whatever his ministers effect in their office, it is of him; he only can lift up his hands to bless his church. But he can make any of

* See the Ordination Office.

his ministers useful, and any of his means effectual, for the communication of grace, direction, and consolation; and if we were looking more through the means to the great Bishop of souls, we should more often, and more abundantly, derive a blessing through them. This defect in our faith and expectation, is the reason we are so dull and lifeless in them, and that they are so often ineffectual and without a blessing. It is in this character, when his church is sunk into darkness, and almost overwhelmed with abounding error, that he often appears for its deliverance and purification, and in due time raises up suitable instruments; commissions, endows them with zeal, wisdom, courage, and the knowledge of the truth, and opens their way for abundant usefulness in the revival of his dying cause. This has been evident in the different ages of his church; nor less in times within our own remembrance, or the remembrance of our fathers. May he now revive his work in the midst of the years, and again pour out his Spirit upon us, according to the beautiful petition of our Liturgy; "Our ears have heard, our fathers have told us, what thou didst in their days, and in the time before them. O Lord, arise, help us and deliver us for thine honour:" or, according to the beautiful expostulation of the church, by the Prophet, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord! awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old: art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?" (Isa. li. 9—11.) O pour out abundantly of thy Spirit, thou great Head of thy church! and hasten the time when all shall know thee, and thy glory shall be revealed to the ends of the earth.

It is in this character that he preserves his people for himself, and maintains the exercises of his grace in their hearts. If they fall or transgress, he checks them by his providence, reproves them by affliction, turns them by his grace, and encourages them by the consolation of his Spirit. How sweet is it to be under his eye, how secure to be under his care! his watchful eyes are ever over all, his heart is set upon the good of his chosen, and is more

zealous for their benefit than they are for his glory. In his tenderness, “he gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young,” and will never leave, never forsake them, He is not wearied, as men, by ingratitude, neglect, obstinacy, ignorance, or weakness; for he is a merciful and faithful Priest (Heb. ii. 17), and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because in all points he was tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (iv. 15.) For this,

6. *He fixes his residence in his church.*—This is a duty of the Episcopal office, which is implied in the very name, an overseer; but whatever may be the vigilance or zeal of the best of characters in the sacred office, they cannot see all, they cannot know all, they cannot afford their help to all, or to every individual of the flock. But here is the superior and eminent glory of our Jesus: his Omnipresence, his Omniscient wisdom, is engaged on behalf of his church. “I will be with thee,” is a promise that can never be unsuitable to any situation: in inward distraction, outward enemies, or spiritual trial, the promise will hold good. There is not an enemy which can escape his observation, not a concern which is beyond or beneath his notice: every individual, as well as the church at large, and as much as the general church at large, is the object of his minute and constant attention. (Isa. xlix. 14—17.) What a glorious Governor is this! How blessed is the church under the care of the gracious Shepherd and Bishop of souls! How much good has been effected in many ages of the church, by one eminent character in such a situation; but whatever excellencies are in any one, or in all collectively, are in him supremely, essentially, and eternally.

Let me then return to this good Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Here is a matter of inquiry: the security of his fold, his family, his church, will little avail me, if I am not within its pale; and if I am, I have returned from my wanderings to him—not to the profession of his name alone, or to the communion of any church, however orthodox, but to Christ. The sinner, yet careless in sin, and following

the world, making it his happiness, portion, and pursuit, is yet a wanderer from him, and must be made sensible of the reality and danger of his wanderings, and return in penitent humiliation, sorrow for sin, and desire of salvation; surrendering up himself to him in his appointed ordinances, or he can never assume the confidence of being under his eye and care. There, in his church, he requires the absolute submission and obedience of all his people. If we would receive his blessing, we must be waiting continually in the ordinances and means of his grace, always remembering to view him through them, and depend only upon his blessing in them; and if we obtained his blessing we have been found in his way, waiting for it: in the reading of his word, in prayer, in waiting at his gates, in the observance of his Sabbaths, in attendance upon his ordinances, particularly his table, we may expect his effectual blessing. There, in his church, he requires our diligent attention to his instruction; there the infallible Teacher guides; there he demands our submission to his sovereign dispensations, as the great Lord and Ruler of his Israel; there it becomes us, in our path of duty, to leave all in his hands, who will order all things well, as to every individual, or to his universal church at large: nor will it ever be necessary to go out of the particular duties prescribed to us in the order of his church, or the place he hath appointed us in it, to assist him in the administration of its government. If at present he pleases to leave imperfection in the best of churches, our duty is to look to him for their providential healing, in his own time and way: we may be comforted under all, that all is in his hands, and he will ultimately purify and extend his church in purity and glory, throughout the earth.

But the great Bishop of souls will at last call all his servants to an account before him. May this ever dwell upon the heart of his inferior servants and his waiting people; Am I amongst his ministering servants? Soon shall I be called to render an account of all I do, or say, or preach in his church; and of the use of that authority and ministry committed to me there: may I be faithful in the discharge

of it, to guide, to guard, to feed, to benefit, to edify, and save his church, that I may not be called to render an awful account of a careless and unfaithful servant. But then shall hearers and members of his church render an account of the ordinances they have enjoyed, the means of grace, the hearing of his Gospel, and of their obedience to the Gospel, before the great Bishop of souls. How serious the concern, that both pastors and people may meet in that awful place before the throne of Christ, with joy and not with grief! not to testify against each other for unfaithfulness or inattention, but to rejoice together in his presence,—we, in having faithfully discharged the office committed to us, and our people in having duly profited by the means and privileges granted to them.

But there the great Bishop of souls will present his church complete: his ministers now preach Christ, warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. This is their desire, this would be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of Jesus Christ; but He can effect what He desires, by the guidance of his providence, and the effectual energies of his grace and Spirit. He will therefore present his church before the throne without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; holy and without blemish.—Under his care let me be guided through life, and appear amongst his church of the first born, redeemed from among men, before his throne; to bless his care, and to adore his wisdom, grace, and faithfulness, throughout eternity.

ESSAY III.

The Life—Our Life.

LIFE is the only source of action, and the spring of all enjoyment. In what it consists the wisest philosophers can never inform us; nor can they tell us what is that peculiar quality which constitutes the difference between substance inert, motionless, and senseless, and substance endued with all the power of sensation, action, and knowledge.

That there is such a thing as life, such a principle in nature (or whatever we may call it) that discovers itself in different modes and degrees, from the vegetation of a plant to the powers of an angelic nature; and that it is something distinct from nature, or the substance of whatever kind in which it may adhere, cannot be denied. But still, though discerned in a variety of operations, itself is, and must be, to us unknown. Life is only necessarily in him, and to him only can it be understood, who is the Self-existent; who derives it from no other, but possesses it in and of himself, and who rather *is, than has Life*; whose very nature is life; whose very essence it is that he lives; and whose name is therefore Jehovah, the Self-existent; who is, and who was, and who is to come. Of him alone therefore can it be justly said, he is THE LIFE. But this is a title which our Redeemer claims (John xi. 25); and in doing this, must claim the incommunicable and sole attributes of Godhead.

This title then holds him forth to our faith as the living Lord, the self-existent Jehovah; nor can it be otherwise understood, where our Lord asserts the claim and proves his right to it, by giving life to one who had been dead four days. To say that he has life, or that he has the gift of life,

might naturally lead us to this conclusion ; but to say that he is *The Life*, is infinitely more, and can never be mistaken, if we are willing to understand. He therefore asserts in another place, in the plainest terms, his priority to Abraham as the **I AM** ; the same who thus manifested himself to Moses in the Mount : “ Before Abraham was *I am*.” And the Jews, disbelieving this his testimony of himself, despised and were ready to stone him ; and did afterwards actually crucify him, for a claim which must either convict him of blasphemy, or prove him to be one with and equal with God. Let us choose which side of the question we will embrace ; either with the unbelieving Jew to deny his glory and his own testimony, and to crucify him afresh ; or with the believing disciple to confess, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, who hast the words of eternal life ;” and to believe the plainer language of his own declaration, that he is *essentially the Life* ; and therefore necessarily one with the ever living Father.

As such alone, he could be the life of creation, and of all nature ; but this he evidently is, as he is declared to be the Creator and Preserver of all : “ By him,” says the Apostle, “ were all things created, whether they be visible or invisible, thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers ; all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Col. i. 16.) “ All things,” says the Evangelist, “ were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made : in him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John i. 3, 4.) Hence he represented himself as the Restorer of life in the resurrection of the dead, and very suitably unites these two views together ; “ I am the Resurrection and the Life ;” for he only can be the Resurrection, the author and the efficient cause of it, who hath the power of life, being the Life itself, *the living God*. This view of him, as the Life in the abstract, holds him forth in his self-existent glories ; but when he is called the life of his people, an allusion is no doubt made to his mediatorial character, office, and authority. The life which he communi-

cates as such, is that spiritual life which man had lost by the fall of his first parents, whereby they are quickened from the death of sin, and live to God, and are delivered from that eternal death which was the just consequence of transgression; that life which consists in the restoration of the Divine favour, and the restoration of the Divine image. In this view he comes nearer to us; and how he becomes, and is such, shall be the principal subject of our present meditation.

And first—He is the life of his people *by purchase*, as he hath thus obtained the right and the power to give eternal life to them. And this we are to contemplate as the ground of the whole. The exceeding great love of the Father in the gift of his Son, and in the appointment and acceptance of his mediation, and the sovereignty and freeness of his grace, must never be forgotten, lest we should improperly consider the Father as wrought upon by the Son to shew mercy: when his own love is the origin of the wonderful design and contrivance; “who SO loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Our eyes are indeed more immediately directed to the Son, because of his personal engagement in, and actual performance of, the work of redemption, in dying that we might live. Here we contemplate a wonderful scene in the undertaking and the work of Christ, from its source in the eternal counsel, to his resuming his throne of glory. We contemplate the origin and operation of everlasting love, originating in those eternal purposes of the triune Jehovah, manifested in Immanuel, God with us; in his condescension even to the death upon the cross, where he became a curse for us; where he laid down his life for the sheep; where he himself was perfected by sufferings, that is, completely fulfilled his engagements as Mediator, that he might be able to give all the blessings of that covenant of redemption (Heb. v. 7—9), according to the language of the Prophet, “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his own arm

brought salvation.” The Apostle, considering the same display of redemption in the blood of Christ, leads us up to the same source,—“the good pleasure which he purposed in himself.” (Eph. i. 7—9.)

But behold the designs of Everlasting Love hasten to maturity; the time approaches, the fulness of time, and “God sends forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) The great mystery of godliness is revealed, God manifest in the flesh; but why does he appear as a weeping infant, cast out from the womb? why, in his maturer age, has he neither power, dignity, honour, nor empire? why, the reverse of all this, has he not where to lay his head? why does he appear as the despised and rejected of men, and eminently the Man of sorrows, so that never sorrow was like unto his sorrow? why is he not honoured of his heavenly Father in the midst of his humiliation? why does he call forth his sword to awake against the Man that is his fellow, as the Lord of hosts. Many a time witnessed his strong crying and tears to him who was able to deliver him, &c.; till, treading the vale of human life, from one stage of sorrow to another, his insulting enemies at last consign him to the cross. Then all nature trembles, while the sun hides its astonished head. He cries, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” but it is finished, and the Son of God bows his anointed head, and yields up the Ghost. But why is this? Then he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and therefore it pleased the Father to bruise him: then he offered himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour: then he fulfilled the engagements of his eternal love, the design of his taking human nature, our flesh and blood, that “by death he might conquer him that had the power of death,” and thus become our Life (Heb. ii. 14); that by the blood of the covenant he might deliver the prisoners out of the pit. (Zech. ix. 11.) The law demanded satisfaction; justice required the death of the guilty; but behold

the sinner's Surety accepts his place: the demand is satisfied; the sentence is fulfilled: he dies, that we might live; and now there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) Here, then, is the cause, the only cause, of all my blessings as a guilty creature, that I have not sunk as a criminal into everlasting destruction; that I open my bodily eyes upon the light of day, or the eyes of faith upon the blessings and hopes of the Gospel; that I live; that I have the prospect of life and immortality, and hope to live for ever. Since my once dying and now ever living Saviour hath obtained a right, and received the authority and power, to give eternal life unto as many as were given him (see Rom. v. 17—21), let my ransomed soul wonder and adore! Here life, the spiritual life of his people, is treasured up immediately in him, *as its Deposit and its Source*.

This, no doubt, is connected with his Divine nature, which constitutes his all-sufficiency for the accomplishment of his office; but it peculiarly arises from the constitution of grace in the covenant of redemption. It pleased God, when he made man, to set up one living head, in whom the life of his posterity should be deposited. Why Infinite Wisdom should have done this, it would be arrogance in us to ask; but the fact is known by the loss of that life, through his fall and guilty transgression. It has pleased God also, in the same sovereignty of his infinite wisdom, to appoint the same constitution in grace; and that in Christ Jesus, the Second Adam, should be placed the fulness of provision for the recovery of fallen man; and that he should therefore be not only a living soul, but a Quickening Spirit, the Restorer of the life of the spirit. As a sinner, therefore, man hath forfeited all his blessings by sin, and must surrender them up into the hands of justice; and, according to the Divine appointment, he can receive them all again only through and from the hands of the Mediator. There is no other way to God; no other medium for his communicating or our receiving the blessings of his grace; for there is no other name under

heaven whereby we must be saved. It hath pleased the Father, therefore, that in him all fulness should dwell; and if so, more especially the gift of that life whereby alone we are capable of enjoying those blessings. The life of the believer is thus hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3): and so connected is the possession of this life with the person and office of Christ, that “he who hath the Son of God hath life, and he who hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Every attempt, therefore, to attain life before God, will leave me under death, and only seal the condemnation by which I am already under the sentence of a broken law; for “he that believeth not is condemned already.” (John iii. 18.) Here life is in its fountain, sovereignly deposited, freely to be communicated, and all-sufficient for the salvation of all his people. But if I fancy myself alive without his grace; if I therefore see not my need, and seek not life from this Source, I shall perish in my state of spiritual death and condemnation. This view of the only method of salvation is no doubt very contrary to the pride and self-consequence of nature; but is as surely the only method which the Scripture reveals, which exhibits a constitution of sovereign grace in which life and all its blessings are only in Christ Jesus. Man, unconscious of the true nature of sin, the forfeiture which he has thereby incurred; and the imbecility which he has thereby contracted; ignorant that all which he can do will only involve him deeper in guilt and ruin, is ready to do many things, to undertake many labours, or perform many duties, in hope of regaining the lost favour of his God, and the rectitude of his nature, while he is unwilling to accept the free gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus. Thus the unconverted Paul, without the law—*i. e.* ignorant of its spirituality and extent—reckoned himself to be alive to God; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died: he found sin to be alive, and himself spiritually dead. Never will the sinner submit to this appointment of God till he finds that he has no life in himself, that he is condemned by the law, and dead in trespasses and sins. Then sub-

mitting to the justice of the sentence, he is willing to accept all as the free gift of God,—pardon, righteousness, justification, grace, sanctification, and glory; and rejoices to find that his life is treasured up in his Saviour, from whom he humbly and cordially receives it, and looks for all its supplies, till consummated in glory; and thus honours him alone in the dependance of faith, and, receiving all through him, gives him all the glory.

But as life is in him as its Source, so from him alone it is communicated in the gift of his

Life-giving Spirit.—Man, as a descendant of Adam, having lost the principle of life, can have no life of a spiritual nature in himself; which life is altogether derived from the Second Adam, and supported by his presence and his power as being a Quickening Spirit. By his Spirit he brings into a real and vital union with himself; and then removes the sentence of death, and quickens from the death of sin; so that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made them free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 1, 2.) And, when given from him, the believer holds it in his right: in him he stands alive before God, and feels it upheld alone by his power, by which being continually quickened, he lives to God, and lives in his spiritual faculties upon the fulness of God. The Apostle has clearly described this spiritual communion, when he says, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The same Spirit is in them as in him, as the Mediator; and so “He is in them, and they in him.” This, no doubt, is a mystery: but so are all the springs of natural life, and especially all spiritual acts; but, like the actings of natural life, they are matters of real experience. Our Lord therefore declares, that except a man be born again of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and though the actings of this life are only known by its effects, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and

whither it goeth ; yet they are notwithstanding true and real. We know not what any kind of life is in itself, but we know it by its acting ; and so, in the spiritual life, the quickening influences of the Spirit of Jesus are discerned in the life of faith, whereby the sinner, formerly dead to God, now lives upon him and to him, and so arises into a conformity to his character and will.

This alone is the proof of the communication of his life-giving influence : the believer is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and is made partaker of a new nature, called the new man, as it is a new principle, exercising itself in a new way through all the powers of man. And though the old man of corrupted nature yet remains, hence it is thwarted, resisted, mortified, and subdued : and never will the new nature be satisfied till it be perfected in the life of glory. It is, therefore, the great practical experimental truth of Christianity, that, if Christ be our life, we live by Christ living in us. Are we, then, thus united unto Christ by his Spirit? for this is the only bond of spiritual union, which alone produces faith, and keeps it in its exercises. And let it be remembered, with self-examination, that it is not talking about Christ, but living by him and upon him, which makes a real Christian ;—for as this life is derived from him, so

It is carried on alone *by the exercises of faith upon him*, as he is the Source of all spiritual life.—When speaking of that by which it is carried on and maintained, the Apostle sums up all in the views of Christ : “ The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” He is the great object of faith ; from whom by faith, as the appointed means, the believer derives all his supplies. It is in this view, and for this reason, that he calls himself the Bread of God, the Bread which came down from heaven, the Living Bread ; and that he compares his grace to waters, living waters ; or, in general, to the rich provisions of a feast. The communications of his grace, through faith, do as truly nourish and increase the spiritual life and growth, as the natural food, received into

the body, supports and refreshes the bodily frame. We know not how the food thus received unites itself with the body, and has an influence upon the natural life; and no wonder, therefore, if we cannot account for a similar effect, upon the spiritual life; but we know that the one is the only constituted means of God for carrying on that life, and it would be most absurd to expect its continuance or comfort without its receiving this continual supply: and in the order of grace, where life is implanted, this is the only constituted means of God for its support; and without the constant exercises of faith upon the person, work, character, and word of Christ, the spiritual life will languish and decay. While faith has respect to his glory as Immanuel, God with us; to his characters and offices as Mediator; to the perfection of his work, and the fulness of his blessings; to the warrant of his word, and the promise of that word, connected with his all-sufficiency to realize and make them good; the believing sinner finds his soul quickened and enlightened in all the exercises of the spiritual life,—in all its acts of love, its duties, or its enjoyments. Just in proportion as these views of him are vigorous and clear, so is the believer alive to the exercise of every grace, the resistance of every temptation, the warfare with every enemy, and the sense of spiritual enjoyment. Hence sin is discovered in all its evils; and God, in Christ Jesus, in all his glory; all that can allure, alarm, encourage, or animate, is brought into operation in the mind, and produces a renovating, sanctifying, and consoling effect.

But, as faith declines, and the views of Jesus are imperfect, the spiritual life languishes; its powers become feeble, its operations uncertain, its resistance to sin and every enemy weak and ineffectual; its acts and duties are unperformed, its hope and enjoyment mixed with doubts and fears, leaving the mind beclouded with uncertainty and guilt. The union with the Source of Life, though never to be broken, being weakened in its effect, communion is

interrupted and suspended, and every sanctifying influence proportionably diminished.

The great practical concern, therefore, of the believer, is the exercise of faith, which is that act of the mind which goes forth to Christ, and derives out of his fulness, and is the exhibition of Christ in his person, offices, and blessings. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Here, then, in the word, the contemplation of the believer must be continually employed, especially in those parts which reveal and display his glories and his grace. Thus he will learn more his suitableness to every want and to every renewed desire; and thus by faith he will become increasingly precious. (1 Pet. i. 8.) The believer lives low, and beneath his privileges, if he lives upon this world, or according to the course of this world. This is not his life; it is far beyond, in its privileges, its source, and its enjoyments. The believer, therefore, does not live according to this world, though he lives in it. He has another life, communicated from his living Saviour, which faith receives and realizes: it is the life of grace hidden from the world, and hidden in its source and security from all his enemies: it is the secret life, unknown but to himself, and often despised by the world; but it shall be visible in all its glory, when He who is his Life shall appear. The confidence of faith, therefore, bringing the hope and enjoyment of this Divine Life, would indeed lift him up above all the pleasures, and above all the troubles and trials, of this low, miserable, and earthly state of existence; for “who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” a name which in that application must include his mediatorial character, as the Messiah, the Saviour of his people. Here is the security of the believer’s spiritual life: it is not in ourselves, as it was in the first Adam; nor is it dependant upon the fulfilment of any terms or conditions on our part, for its acceptance or continuance. Jesus has fulfilled the terms of the new covenant of grace; Jesus has obtained

the blessings, and the right of bestowing them (John xvii. 2); Jesus possesses them, and holds them in trust for his people; and the Gospel dispensation is an invitation for sinners of the sons of men to come and receive them, and a promise that whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out. The same promise secures the continuance where actually received, and guarantees the actual enjoyment through eternity. Faith, the means of receiving and enjoying, may in the present state be shaken, may become low, or at times may actually fail, and the exercises and enjoyment of this life be correspondently affected. Hence the various changes and the uncertain frames of the believer: but Jesus, the Source of Life, is yet uninjured; and in him the spring is full, and the fountain overflowing.

Here the believer may come again and again, in the exercise of faith: here he may come for faith, and for the increase of faith. He, who is the Life of his people, is, as he must be for that purpose, the Author and the Finisher of faith; and thus they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and when the life of faith shall be finished on earth, still shall it be received from the same Source, and enjoyed in union with Christ Jesus throughout eternity, in the kingdom of glory. This is implied by the emblematical representation, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." There he will complete the enjoyment of that union with his people, for which he prayed in one of the last acts of his intercession upon earth: his people shall be one with him, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father; then the glory which is given to him as Mediator, he will give unto them; he in them, and they in him; they will be made perfect in one. Then he will bring all his people to behold the glory which is given him, and to enjoy it with him in the fullest communications, most immediately from himself, for ever. (See John xvii. 20—24.) Eternal life is but the sight and fruition of his glory; to live with him, and to be like him, by the communication of his glory; for when he appears

again, who is their Life, the design of that appearance will be, that they may be, and appear, with him in glory. Let us, then, adore him, in whom, and from whom, all our blessings spring as fallen creatures ; as sinners in our origin, dead in trespasses and sins. The nature of the life which he communicates will come more properly under consideration, when we contemplate him as *the Eternal Life of his people*: at present our principal design has been to lead the faith of his people to him, as the alone Author of all, that we may seek it from him only, trust in him alone for its increase and perfection, and give him the glory of all that we at present enjoy by faith.

Sweet is the peace, and high the joy, which now fills the breast when faith realizes the fulness that is in him, or anticipates the future prospect in the line of the promise. What then will be the glory and the joy to see him as he is, to receive by immediate communication from himself, and to be admitted to the closest union with him which creatures can enjoy, and that eternally ! If the present enjoyment by faith, with all its interruptions, be all that the believer can desire, what shall be the bliss when it shall be perfected above, without intervening sin, or any interrupted communication ! If it be life eternal to know him now, by faith, it will be all that life can enjoy to behold and be with him then.

Blessed be that Jesus who hath thus obtained, by his death, the power of giving eternal life to his people ; who secures it in himself ; who now communicates it to faith, that faith of which he is himself the Author and Finisher. Oh, may he bring me to the full enjoyment ! and the glory must for ever redound to himself, and excite the song of eternal praise amidst the ransomed multitude, by his grace and power alone raised to, and supported in, the life of glory and immortality around his throne.

ESSAY IV.

Eternal Life.

LIFE and death are the two great concerns of men ; the one the object of his chief desire and affection, the other of his greatest dread and aversion. To support and prolong life, or to secure its happiness, is the ultimate design of most of his labours and pursuits ; while to avoid what may endanger that life, or hasten the approach of death, is the subject of his most anxious solicitude and constant care.

But if it be so as to this poor dying life, how much more worthy of attention is the life of the immortal spirit ! Life is the best gift of God upon earth, as it is the only means of enjoying all besides ; and yet, without a prospect beyond the grave, of how little value is the transitory gift ! This is but a world of sin and sorrow ; if we look around us, what an infinitude of miseries and diseases are verging upon us ; and whatever be my state or situation in the present life, or whatever its present enjoyment, soon I must part with life itself, and pay the debt of death, and pass, I know not where ; for “ man dieth and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the Ghost, and where is he ? ” (See Job xiv. 7—10.) What is the state which awaits him hereafter ? Who can tell us ? Who can remove the painful doubt, and scatter the dreadful solicitude ? None of the sons of men ; nothing but the word of God, wherein life and immortality are brought to light. Jesus who, as the Son of God, one in the Divine nature, is the essential Life ; who is Life itself, becomes, in his mediatorial character ; our Life, the Life of his people ; the only, but all-sufficient, Source of its communication ; and this, therefore, is the record that

God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (1 John v. 11.) He, therefore, that hath the Son of God hath life (ver. 12); a life that never dies, and never shall be taken from him. Blessed revelation, blessed Jesus! may I know him as mine, that I may live spiritually through him, and so live eternally with him! These views have delightfully opened upon us in considering him as *the Life*, and before as the *Quickening Spirit*; and, in the present consideration of him as *Eternal Life*, we shall be led more fully to contemplate the nature of that life which he bestows. No character can be more suited to the state of man; no gift so necessary, so suited to his felicity. May it be mine! may it be the reader's, till we adore him with all the powers of that life which he bestows, throughout eternity!

The gift of eternal life to a dying sinner must include in it, all that is necessary for the ultimate eternal felicity of the soul in glory, in all the various steps which may progressively lead to it. To prolong, or to restore, the present mode of living, would only to a sinner be the prolonging of sin and misery: and therefore eternal life, as a life of blessedness, cannot consist in the mere continuance of existence. This might be sufficient for the expectation of the angelic spirits before the throne, already admitted into their union with the Divine nature, which constitutes the happiness of a creature; but for man departed from God, alive only to sense, and spiritually dead to God, something more must be requisite for that life which can imply felicity: there must be some effectual means manifested of recovery from that state, and a new life must be communicated to render him capable of Divine and spiritual enjoyment. To procure this, was the great design and undertaking of the Redeemer: to reveal it to man, is the design of his Gospel: to bestow it, is the office of the Spirit of Christ. He, therefore, that is in Christ is a new creation, a new creature, possessed of that spiritual life in which his fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. This view opens to us a subject of infinite practical importance,

of serious self-inquiry, and of adoring gratitude to the life-giving Saviour.

The first thing necessary, in the communication of this important gift, is the removal of the sentence of death which lies upon us as transgressors ; and this is the peculiar work of the Redeemer, and the ground of all the other blessings of his love. Sin and death are what men greatly desire to separate ; but, alas ! they are united in the very nature of things, and by the decree of God : as soon as man, therefore, became a sinner, he fell under the power of death, according to the sentence, “ In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die ;” and in this state, as unable to remove it, he is shut up under that sentence of death. As children of a fallen parent, this is the state of all mankind, who, being involved in his guilt, as sinning in him, and, exposed to his curse, are going on to increase that guilt, and aggravate that destruction. The whole world, therefore, lieth in wickedness ; every mouth is stopped, and, by the law, all flesh stands guilty before God. As many, therefore, as are of the works of the law remain under that curse. (Rom. iii. 19 ; Gal. iii. 10.) Thus the Scripture, concluding “ all under sin” (Gal. iii. 22), hath shut them up as prisoners under sentence of death, and waiting for the execution. A sinner, like the already condemned malefactor, is dead in law ; and hence the body waits, with awful expectation, for its dissolution by natural death ; and the soul, with still more awful expectation, for that wrath to come, which is the second death, the eternal death of an immortal soul.

Alas ! what hath sin done ? Careless sinner, what art thou doing ? why art thou so unconcerned ? Without an interest in Christ, art thou ignorant of thy state ? dost thou disbelieve the Scripture declaration ? or if so, canst thou discredit so solemn a fact, discovered in thine own heart, and in the character and conduct of all around thee ? or, dost thou dare the arm of Omnipotence, the Author of Life, to execute the sentence of death ? Behold the most awful display of its execution, in the way of deliverance, and

tremble and repent, and supplicate for mercy. When the condescending Redeemer died upon the cross, what were all his sufferings, but the acknowledgment of the justice of the sentence; that those for whom he appeared to lay down his life as a ransom, had therefore forfeited it to Divine justice? But while he acknowledges the sentence, he bears it himself, that by becoming a curse for us, he might deliver us from the curse of the law. If this then be the only means, which Divine Wisdom hath devised for its removal, in the deep sorrows of the Saviour, and the bitter agonies of the cross, let us contemplate the great evil of sin, and the awful certainty of that death which, without an interest in that redemption, awaits the impenitent and unbelieving children of fallen Adam. But art thou a guilty penitent, distressed with sin, and inquiring how you may again draw near to God, and how the sentence which stands against thee, may be removed? behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; behold the dying Jesus, the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth; by whom we are delivered from the law, that being dead by which we were held, and in whom there is no condemnation to the believing sinner, made free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. vi; vii; viii. 1; x. 4, &c.)

What a glorious Saviour! how sure, how suitable the way which is opened through him, to life and salvation! If a penitent sinner, coming to the hope of the Gospel, be distressed and discouraged, it must be from his not discovering the glory of the Saviour, the fulness of his redemption, and the freeness of his grace. Here is a sure foundation for the sinner to rest upon: the atonement is all-sufficient, the redemption price is complete, the satisfaction is made, and the merit of his whole work is infinite. The death is borne by the sinner's Surety, and the sinner therefore must legally be delivered. (Job xxxiii. 23, 24.) Cut off from all self-dependence, since by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified, we have complete salvation in Christ, and are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ; and, being justified, we

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1, &c.) The sentence is taken off, the prisoner not only stands acquitted, but in the righteousness of his Surety delivered. The Law has not only no further demand against him, but proclaims him righteous and just: the Redeemer himself therefore preaches liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them which are bound. (Isa. lxi. 1.) Let the prisoners come forth: again the miserable captives of sin and satan shall be restored, and, admitted to the privileges of the citizens of Sion, of the household of faith, shall become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This is the hope the Gospel holds forth to the trembling penitent; and in flying to this Redeemer in faith, this hope is mine. If in Christ Jesus by faith, all these benefits and blessings are actually mine. I may rejoice and glory in them; for who is he that condemneth, since it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? (Rom. viii. 34.) But as the sinner is not only dead in law, as under the sentence of death, but dead in fact, as having lost the principle of spiritual life, under the power of spiritual death;

He who is the Eternal Life of men, must be therefore, *The Author of spiritual life in his heart.*—It cannot be sufficient of itself that a way should be opened for the bestowal of spiritual blessings; there must likewise be a nature, a heart, a disposition, or the faculty of spiritual life, for the enjoyment of those blessings. The work of grace in his people is therefore spoken of as a new creation, a new birth, and the communication of a new life. Believers are created anew in Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 10): they have a new heart, and a right spirit put within them (Ezek. xxxvi. 26): they have a new life; for you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. (Eph. ii. 1.) There are different modes of living according to the nature of the subject; and all that we know of any kind of life, is to have powers and faculties of living in that certain way; and to be destitute of those powers or faculties, is to be

dead to that kind of life. Hence a man may be alive to the world, and dead to God; may live as to the world, yet may know nothing of living to God; may have powers or faculties for the life of sense, and yet no power nor faculty for spiritual or heavenly enjoyments. This we see and feel is the case with the sinner, who is therefore properly said to be dead in trespasses and sins. While all alive to sense, capable of discerning and judging of the things which are connected with it, and with powers suited to the enjoyment of the animal or the rational life, he has neither understanding, heart, nor disposition, to relish spiritual things: for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that alone which is born of the Spirit is spirit; so that the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The principle of this life must be communicated; the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, can alone make me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.) And every believer must say, “We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 12.) Thus, by the communication of his Spirit, Christ unites himself with his people, and becomes their life; and they live by Christ living in them. But as this has been more properly treated of in the foregoing Essay, on *Christ our Life*, and when considering him under the title of *the Quickening Spirit*, our present attention shall be paid to the consideration of what that life is which he thus communicates, and the actings whereby it is discovered. And it will appear that the life he gives is a spiritual life, in opposition to the carnal life; a life of faith, in opposition to the life of sense; a life of conformity to God, in opposition to a life of enmity and disobedience against God; and thus a life eternal, in opposition to the present dying life of mortality and sin.

1. *It is a spiritual life*, in opposition to the carnal life. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” In the work

of regeneration, if there be no new faculties bestowed or communicated to the mind, there doubtless is a principle of new life communicated to those faculties which are there; by which they are suited to different exercises and enjoyments than before. Such a real change takes place, whereby the understanding perceives, the will desires, the affections delight in and pursue, what before they were ignorant of, or averse to. And where this change is effected, there is as true and as real a principle of a new and spiritual life communicated to the soul, to be exercised on God and spiritual things, as there is of natural life communicated to the body in its first quickening and natural birth, to be exercised on the things of the world, and the present system of sensible objects. It is the gift of life from him who is the Quickening Spirit; which cannot be known but by experience; and which depends for its exercise, growth, and well-being, upon constant spiritual communications from the same source; so that the believer lives by Christ living in him, or as the branch united to and deriving juice from this living root and stalk. Hence the believer is seeking his support and happiness in God, and in his love; and in whatever leads to him, or promotes communion with him. The life of sense, indeed, in the present state, must be supported; and the necessary attention to the things with which it is connected, and by which alone it can be sustained and enjoyed, too often draw off the mind from spiritual objects, and weaken their energy, and the influence of grace upon the mind. This the believer laments; and the more so, the more lively his spiritual senses and discernment. For there is a something, higher, a principle of life and enjoyment, distinct and more elevated in the soul of the believer; a principle which, though sometimes weakened, and too often depressed with the influence of surrounding objects, is as real as the principle of natural life, suited to the life and enjoyment of the body.

The Apostle has, in a most striking manner, distinguished these different principles, and marked out their

effects and their different ends, when he says; “ They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit; for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, &c.; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” &c. (See Rom. viii. 5—11.) Nothing can more decisively prove the distinction of which we are speaking, or more clearly elucidate its importance, and the manner in which the change is effected, and its very important consequences, than this declaration of the Apostle. The new life of grace will be exercised upon, and delight in, spiritual objects. The love of God, the light of his countenance, the enjoyment of his presence, the communication of his grace and blessings,—as they are indeed realities of the spiritual world, though little thought of by the carnal mind, are viewed as such by the believer: quickened by grace, he feels something of their power, and really desires still more of their enjoyment. Hence, sensible of the nature and importance of the immortal soul, and the suitableness of the blessings of redemption revealed in the Gospel, to its true and eternal interest, he groans under the remains of sin, and longs for deliverance; his soul aspires to communion with a reconciled God in Christ Jesus, and is found in the exercise of prayer and praise, as the appointed means of obtaining, maintaining, and increasing it. He desires conformity to the mind and will of God, as the perfection of the spiritual life; and renounces the things of this world, as contrary to its progress or enjoyment. In the present state of things, indeed, his life is a mixed life; and therefore mixed and varying in its enjoyment: but maintained by the arm of Omnipotence, it is a secure life; it is growing up through all the various exercises and oppositions it meets with here, and often rises above every obstacle and depression; especially when

most separated from earth, in the scene of trial, affliction, and the views of death: but it will not, it cannot, be perfected till this body be laid down, which unites it so closely to carnal objects, and which so often demands its attention and solicits its affections; and till the immortal soul can act with all its renewed powers unfettered, set at liberty from earth and corruption, this body of sin and death, in the world of glory. Till then, being spiritual, it must be,

A life of faith, in opposition to a life of sense.—This is the principle which peculiarly distinguishes the renewed nature: to live by faith, to walk by faith, is the characteristic difference of the spiritual from the carnal mind. When the latter sinks down into the grosser enjoyments of the animal nature, the corrupt lusts of the flesh, the difference is plainly seen; but the difference is as real, when the carnal mind is elevated into the more refined sentiment and enjoyment of the rational life: still its highest views will be found to rest in sense and sensible objects, and to rest short of God and spiritual things, which are equally unsuitable to its state and disrelishing to its taste. Still the things around govern the sentiments, the desires, the affections, and the pursuits; and God (as the object of supreme and spiritual delight,) is not in all their thoughts. Not so the believer: the things upon which he looks with delight and attachment, are not present things, the objects of time and sense: the principles which govern him are not derived from these: what others cannot discern, he beholds by faith, and thus learns to despise what others value, and to value what others despise. His faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. xi. 1.) And thus, like the worthies of old, like Abraham, the father of the believing; like Moses, who had respect unto the recompence of reward; like the ancient Patriarchs, who were persuaded of, and embraced, the promises, he declares himself a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, looking for better things, and a better country, even an heavenly. This then is the most important inquiry, as most

decisive of our character and state, What is the life we live? what are its principles, what its objects, and what its actings? It is not a mere profession of Christianity which proves our union with Christ, as our Life; or, according to his promise, the communication of eternal life from him; but having the Spirit of life from Christ, being quickened by that Spirit from the death of sin, having the same Spirit with Christ, the same temper and disposition, as to the world and eternity. It was the perfect principle of faith, in its perfect exercise, by which he triumphed over earth and sense, and finished the work he had undertaken, when, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. The same faith, in its degree, is the principle of the Christian's life, directing him to the same objects and hopes, influencing to the same acts, and securing his triumph over the world and sin; leading him to despise its glories, to endure preeminently its sorrows, and elevating his mind to brighter views, and the expectation of greater joys above. He cannot be satisfied with profession, or a cold assent to the truth and doctrines of the Gospel: his faith is a principle of action, that not only delights him in the contemplations of the closet, and in the duties and enjoyments of the house of God, but follows him into the places of commerce, influences him in all the relations of life, and in all his intercourse with the world around him. While engaged in the concerns of this life and the pursuits of earth, here he cannot rest: the language of his heart is, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me," &c.

As living by faith upon eternal realities, he can never be satisfied with the sweetest enjoyments of sense, or the most alluring temptations of the world, its honours, its profits, or its possessions. God, Christ, his Spirit, his grace, his love, his favour, his blessings, his heaven, his glory, are the only things which can satisfy the affections of his renewed soul. Let me, says he, walk near to God, in all the paths of Providence; let nothing separate me from his love now, till I am with and like him, and enjoy

him for ever. Blessed be the Lord, our Saviour, our eternal life; if these desires are wrought into the heart, the blessings shall no doubt be soon bestowed. He hath purchased them for his people, by the infinite price of his atoning blood: and wherever he hath given a heart to value them, however unworthy the subject, his hand will graciously bestow them; for this eternal life is the free gift of God, in our Lord Jesus Christ. How different, alas! is the character of many, who profess to be partakers of the gift; but if Christ be my life, the life of faith will prove it, in its triumph over the life of sense. This is indeed the decided evidence of my union with him; for as this is the principle acting of the spiritual life, it is the proof of our being partakers of it; and when faith governs the heart, the gift of regenerating grace must have been communicated from above. When faith keeps the soul looking to Christ for all grace and salvation; when the views of the soul are spiritual, and the objects of its desire and affection of an heavenly nature; when these things govern the conduct, there must be a new nature, the gift of the quickening Spirit of Christ. These things are the suitable objects of faith; and if alive by faith, I shall live by faith; and this faith, beholding the excellency and glory of spiritual things, will become practical in the life, and effect

A life of conformity to God, in opposition to a life of enmity and disobedience to God.—This was the life from which man fell in Adam; and this is the life to which he is restored by Christ Jesus. The Spirit of Christ forms the renewed heart into the same image; the old man is crucified, that the new man may revive. Hence arises an hatred of sin, an acknowledgment of its deserts, and a desire of deliverance from it. And while the salvation of Christ is revealed to the heart, in its everlasting security, it brings back the heart into the love of God, and forms it to a holy delight in his purity and his will. “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God.” (Gal. ii. 19.) The character of God, as revealed, is now

the object of supreme love: the ways of God are esteemed just and holy, and the word of God the pleasure of the soul. All his commands are holy, just, and good; and his presence in his ordinances is the joy and triumph of the believer. As the Spirit of Life is communicated from Christ, and the believer lives through him, so he is formed like him, in the image of him who created him; the living branch of the living Vine, bringing forth much fruit. (John xv. 5.) Obedience is delightful, suited to the very nature of the renewed man; and, as far as grace prevails, he delights in the law of God after the inner man. Though he still feels the body of sin and death, the remains of the old man of sin, and therefore must maintain a continual warfare, yet the Spirit as surely lusteth against the flesh, as the flesh against the Spirit. The life of grace is as real as the life of sense; and hence, the groan of sorrow, the struggling of the warfare, the fight of faith, even to the end. While these exist together, so it must be; but soon shall the body of sin be totally destroyed, and the life of grace shall then be perfected. But even now, the believer, delivered from the Law, that being dead whereby he was held, is brought to serve God in newness of the Spirit. He is made free from sin, in its dominion and power, as well as its guilt and condemnation, and is become the servant of God, having his fruit unto holiness.

It is true, as in the natural life, so in the spiritual life, there are degrees of vigour and of growth: the leaven diffuses its gradual influence; the mustard-seed must have its growth, before it is matured and becomes a great tree. Babes, young men, and fathers are found in the household and fold of God: the babe must grow up from infancy to manhood, and from manhood to full and mature age. But the living child is possessed of all the powers of man, though yet weak and unfit for the more active exertions. There is an essential difference between a living child and a dead carcase, or even between the life which it possesses and that of any other animal; so the new-born babe, in the house of God, is really partaker of the same spiritual life

as the fathers in Christ, discovering itself in the same way in the exercises of faith, directed to the same object, and leading to the same end : though faith may be weak, and its actions correspondent, there is an essential difference between a dead sinner and the weakest babe in Christ, as there is between life and death. The new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the word, that it may grow thereby ; and it does thus grow in the faith of Jesus : it possesses the vital power of action, and follows with desire and love to the ultimate perfection of its renewed nature, the full power and enjoyment of the life of the Spirit.

In this pursuit let the believer recollect, that as, in the natural life, there are certain appointed means of its support and nourishment ; so also, in the spiritual life, God hath appointed means, in the use of which alone we can expect his blessing. For though natural life is altogether dependant upon God, we never think of its continuance or its comfort, but in the use of the appointed means of nourishment and supply : equally absurd would it be for the believer to expect to live, to be alive, to be vigorous, but in the use of the appointed means of spiritual nourishment. Reading the word, hearing the truth, attending upon the ordinances and sacrament, accompanied with prayer and serious meditation, are the usual, the constituted, means of spiritual profit. In these the spiritual exercises of faith on Christ feed upon him as the bread of life, and grow thereby. Without these, no wonder that the life of grace is low, and sometimes scarcely to be discerned ; for in the use of means the Lord hath promised his blessing, and in that alone the believer grows up into Christ Jesus in all things. Thus the life of grace is carried on, and, by the constant communication of living influences, perseveres to the end ; and thus the life which he bestows becomes

A life eternal, in opposition to the present dying life of *mortality and sin*.—Happy is it for the believer, that, as Christ is his life, so his life is laid up in him, and in him it is secured. He who hath quickened the sinner, will support and maintain the life he communicates : he who is the

Author, will be the Finisher of faith; and will preserve his people, kept by almighty power, through faith unto salvation. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” is the ground of the believer’s confidence.

“I give unto my sheep eternal life,” says the ever-loving Saviour, “and they shall never perish;” and, to secure them unto the enjoyment, “none shall pluck them out of my hands.” (John x. 28.) Hence, this is eternal life, “to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” Hid with Christ in God, our life is secured; and the groaning of grace shall issue in the triumph of glory. For when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. The life of grace is now the same in its nature, its objects, its felicity, and its supply; but then shall it be perfected, and appear in all its glory. Then the faculties of the new nature shall be perfected, all its desires completed; and the eternal enjoyment of God and Christ Jesus, which is now the object of the believer’s desire and delight, though so mixed and interrupted, shall be consummated without any mixture of sin, or interruption of fear and sorrow. Sin and death shall be no more: but the blessed Redeemer will communicate all his fulness of life and glory, and that without a shade throughout eternity. The sentence of death is now taken from the believer; and his right and title to life eternally secured, by the atonement and triumph of the Redeemer. His nature is renewed and formed for the enjoyment of his presence, the blessings of his salvation, and the fulness of his bliss: but then the whole scheme of redemption shall be consummated; the immortal spirit, in unchanging union and communion with the Fountain of happiness, with immortal powers fitted for the full enjoyment, shall triumph in the full possession of that glory everlasting, that life eternal, which flows from the presence of its Lord and Saviour.

ESSAY V.

Lion—Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

THE lion was one of the sacred figures of the cherubim ; and as it was therein always united with the man, it seems evidently to allude to that person in the Godhead who was to become man—"The Word made flesh." It was also the standard of the tribe of Judah, and might be meant to represent the warlike nature and courage of that regal tribe: "Judah shall couch as a lion, and as an old lion ; who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. xlix. 9.) But perhaps it had figuratively a more comprehensive design ; and might be intended to represent the glory of Messiah, as coming from that tribe. It would then remind them, when they went forth to war, of him who alone giveth strength to the battle ; of the Lord Jehovah, or Messiah, engaged for their success, and for whose sake their preservation was secured. This view of it seems to be justified by the Apostle, when he entitles the Redeemer *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah* (Rev. v. 5) ; either designating him as the true standard of that tribe, under whom they should make war and overcome ; or as the glorious Messiah and conquering Saviour, who should descend in his human nature from that illustrious tribe. In either view, it affords us a most animating subject of consideration, displaying the Divine glories and power of the exalted Mediator, and his suitableness to conduct the order of Providence and the concerns of his people ; for the accomplishment of their hopes, and the purposes of their salvation. This was the peculiar design when he was thus represented to the faith of the Apostle, contemplating the scenes which were folded up in the decree of Providence :

he wept much, because no man was found able or worthy to open them ; to read the book, or even to look thereon. But in this situation his faith is directed to the Mediator, in this exalted character : “ Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” who, though a man, is also the Root of David, “ he hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof,” to execute all the purposes of God, and fulfil the decree of his mysterious Providence, through time into eternity. Such indeed is the glorious Saviour in whom we trust: his character inspires us with courage and confidence, amidst our manifold and powerful enemies. Here we are taught to look to our sure refuge and protection. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah in our Jesus. The title is accurately fulfilled, whether we consider the place the lion holds in the animal creation, the properties by which he is distinguished, or the reference to the standard of the royal tribe. Let faith contemplate him in his person and attributes, and the weakest believer may take courage : the church may commit all its concerns to him, assured by his promise that he will become its protector, and take every individual believer under his care ; secure them from all that can hurt them, and make them, while fighting under his banner, through himself, more than conquerors.

The lion is the royal beast, the king of the animal tribes ; entitled to be considered such by the dignity of his appearance, and the courage and generosity of his nature. “ His figure is respectable, his looks determined, his gait stately, his voice tremendous. He is the model of strength, joined to agility ; and, as being the most courageous and generous of all warlike beasts, he is always considered as the emblem of strength and valour.”

The place, therefore, which he holds in the animal creation, renders him a *suitable emblem of the regal majesty, dignity, and dominion of the Mediator* ; at the same time that he represents the beauty, dignity, and glory of his person, and his ability and readiness to save. The lion and man, united in the cherubim (Ezek. i. 10), repre-

sented him as Immanuel, God with us; the Child born, the mighty God; the form of God uniting with the form of a servant; and in this his mediatorial person, uniting in itself the Godhead and the Manhood, he is exalted upon the throne as the Friend of sinners, to carry on all the designs of Providence; and as such he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The full flowing mane of the Lion, which he can erect or agitate at his pleasure, has always been the acknowledged hieroglyphical representation of light and glory: and how ineffable are the glories of his person thus exalted! “glorified again in our nature with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was” (John xvii. 5—25, &c.); one in the Father, and the Father in him, and receiving that glory which Jehovah would not give to another. Here, upon the throne, he is acknowledged, King of kings and Lord of lords. His dominion is an universal dominion, before which all creatures must submit; for “God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.” (Phil. ii. 9, 10, &c.) “All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him service.” (Psa. lxxii. 11.) “To him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess.” (Rom. xiv. 11.) The earthly emblem is indeed but a weak representation of his inconceivable and ineffable majesty, who is the brightness of glory, and the express image of the Father’s person; in whom the Divine glory was manifested, and from whom it broke forth, beaming even through the covering of his human nature upon earth; when he appeared in the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But upon the throne, it shines with all the brightness of its unveiled splendour; for there he appears in his true character, and in all the dignity, majesty, and honour of his own eternal Godhead.

The properties of the lion are strength, courage, bravery, and activity, united with generosity: “a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any.” (Prov. xxx. 30.) Various illustrations of these circumstances may be found in any natural history of animals. “The male is the most courageous; but the female, when

she has young, is perfectly rapacious and terrible: she regards no danger, attacks all indifferently, and carries her prey to her young; and, attacked herself, she is perfectly furious, and defends herself and her young till torn in pieces."

Such a dread have all other animals of the lion, that it has been observed by those who have travelled some countries which it inhabits, that "they knew when lions were near, by their cattle: their dogs crept close without barking, oxen and horses sighed deeply, laid upon the ground, and stood up alternately, appearing not to know what to do." It is always spoken of, therefore, as an emblem of power, strength, and courage: "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down till he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a young lion: who shall stir him up?" (Num. xxiii. 24; and xxiv. 9.) The warlike tribe of Dan is described, in Deut. xxxiii. 22, by his leaping like a lion's whelp, "from Bashan *."

This is similar to the prophetic blessing of Jacob upon the tribe of Judah: "Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. xlix. 8, 9.)

The design of the emblem is to represent (and it is, as far as such earthly emblems can be, a suitable representation of) *the great, the mighty, the invincible power of the Lord our Redeemer*, in overcoming his own and his people's enemies. This is the principal view, when he is proposed to our faith in this character, that he is able to manage and conduct all the concerns of his people, and all the affairs of Providence, to bring all his designs into effect till the mystery of redemption shall be complete. (Rev. v. 5, &c.)

* The leaps and bounds of the lion are prodigious: he will often leap fifteen or twenty feet at once. See Buffon Hist. Nat. tom. VIII. p. 124.

And this power is displayed in subduing his own enemies in the arduous undertaking; and in bringing down the heart of his people to himself, and then taking them under his own care, to deliver them through all, to eternal salvation. Considered in this view, how true, how suitable is the allusion, and how glorious the character implied in it!

The Lion of the tribe of Judah has displayed his power in the destruction of all his enemies, in the arduous work of redeeming his people to himself. This is the leading idea of the figure, and is already realized in the victorious conquests of our redeeming Lord. The very design of his undertaking, and of his assumption of our nature was, to become the Conqueror, for his people, of sin and death, and the powers of hell. The first prophecy and promise held him forth as becoming the Seed of the woman, to bruise the serpent's head: and though, in the accomplishment of this work, he thus appears in the weakness of human nature, yet his lowest condescension is only in order to complete his designs of victory; since in our nature, and by death alone, can the work of redemption be completed, or he be overcome who hath the power of death. Behold him engaging for the combat: "O death! I will be thy plague: O grave! I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The success of his undertaking is thus predicted by the Prophet: "He shall swallow up death in victory: the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it," &c. (Isa. xxv. 8—12.) Behold him going forth to the battle, firm and intrepid: he anticipates his triumph when actually entering upon the scene of combat: he set his face to go up to Jerusalem, and as they were going in the way, "Jesus went before them, and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid." (Mark x. 32.) What Divine ardour must have appeared in his countenance sufficient to attract the peculiar attention of his disciples, and excite a dread of some solemn scene approaching, and which led him to an immediate disclosure of the sufferings which were now ready to fall

upon him ! (ver. 33, &c.) In the view of this, he expresses the ardent longing of his soul for their accomplishment : “ I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how is my soul straitened until it be accomplished ! ” I long, as though he had said, for the bitter conflict of my agonizing suffering, assured of completing at once my triumph and the redemption of my people. Bitter indeed was the conflict of the garden and of the cross : then the heel of his human nature was wounded ; but there he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on the cross (Col. ii. 15) ; and, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb. ii. 14.)

But behold he rises ! the Lord, with his sore and great and strong sword, hath punished leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and hath slain the dragon that is in the sea. He carries away the sting in triumph, and bids the enemy destroy no more. Behold the mighty Conqueror proclaims his victory : he breaks through the bars of the grave, and ascends the hill of the Lord. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and let the King of glory, the Lord mighty in battle, enter in to claim the reward of victory. But who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? his garments dyed in blood. Behold it is he who spake in righteousness, when he engaged for the redemption of his people, and hath now manifested himself mighty to save : for he hath trodden the wine-press alone, and will, with equal ease and certainty, tread down all his enemies. (Isa. lxiii. 1, &c.) Behold his work of redemption is complete, his victory is finished : it only remains to bring his people to himself, and put them into actual possession. Let the voice, therefore, of joy and rejoicing be in the dwellings of the righteous ; for the right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly : the right hand of the Lord is exalted ; the right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly : This is the Lord's doing ; and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day of triumph which himself hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save

us now, then, we beseech thee, O Lord! and we beseech thee, send us now thy blessing. Yes, we will praise thee, for thou hast heard us, and art become our salvation. (See Psal. cxviii. 15—25, &c.) But no display of his power is greater than that by which, having redeemed his people for himself, he brings them to himself, that they may be disposed and capable of enjoying his salvation. Here the Lion of the tribe of Judah discovers his invincible power, together with the generous kindness of his nature, in conquering the rebellious spirit of sinners to the faith and love of the Gospel, and bringing down the hearts of his people into submission to himself and the methods of his grace.

To bring the heart of a rebellious sinner to the obedience of righteousness, and the pride of self-righteousness to the humiliation of repentance and faith, are miracles of almighty power and sovereign grace. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;” and nothing but his power can make them willing. When a sinner is stopped in his course of sin, of careless indifference to God, of proud contempt or profane disobedience; when from a rebel he becomes an obedient subject; is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; no hand but that of the Lord Almighty, no power but that of the Spirit of Christ, could ever have effected a change like this. His word, in the hand of his Spirit, is as a sharp two-edged sword: the sinner feels it coming home into his very heart, and wounding with strong but secret convictions of sin and guilt; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. iv. 12.) And when, in the beautiful figurative language of the Psalmist, he girds his sword upon his thigh, and rides on in majesty and glory, his right hand instructs him in awful and wonderful victory; his arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies, whereby the people fall under him. (Psa. xlv. 3—6.) In the same emblematical manner he is represented as going forth in the Gospel

upon a white horse, “conquering and to conquer.” (Rev. vi. 2.) And again: he who is faithful and true in righteousness, making war with the sharp sword of his mouth; the word of his truth and power smiting the nations, and bringing them into subjection to himself; his name is said to be the “*Word of God.*” These are awful representations of his power, but of his power mingled with his mercy; not in the destruction of his people, but the destruction of their enemies, and in conquering their heart to the obedience of faith and love. Thus he will spread “his dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him: his enemies shall lick the dust, &c.; yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall do him service.” (Psa. lxxii. 8, 9, &c.) All must and shall submit, willing or unwilling, to the government of the exalted Redeemer; so that, if our hearts are not subdued by his gracious influences into obedience, they shall be subdued by his power to everlasting destruction. Subdue, thou blessed Jesus, the hearts of men by the sceptre of thy grace, before thou comest to destroy with the rod of thine indignation! Awful is the consideration of his absolute and infinite power to the sinner that dares to reject his grace and salvation; for he has power to avenge his own honour and his injured right, and he will avenge all disobedience. His judgments will be found more terrible than the roaring of the fiercest lion; and if he be not on our side, to our salvation, he will be against us, to our final and inevitable destruction. Behold him now maintaining his honour in the world, and punishing a professing church which has departed from the purity of his faith and the simplicity of his Gospel. How awful does he appear in his earthly judgments! The Lion hath roared: who will not fear? the Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy? (Amos iii. 8.) “I will be unto Ephraim,” says he, “as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and will go away; I will take away, and none shall

rescue him." (Hosea v. 14: compare xi. 10; xiii. 7, 8.) But if so terrible in his earthly judgments, when he arises to shake terribly the earth; when he commands, and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, in vain will his enemies call to the rocks to fall on them, or the hills to cover them from his presence. O sinner! come and shelter thyself beneath the sceptre of his grace, that you may escape his righteous indignation. Now the Lion of the tribe of Judah discovers his almighty power united with infinite kindness and compassion; he delights not in the exercise of mere power for the destruction of his enemies, but mingles his power with his richest grace, and spares all who submit to his authority and the methods of his grace. The humble penitent may take up the beautiful language of the Jewish Lawgiver, when expostulating for his people, and shall receive the same gracious answer: "And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word." (Num. xiv. 17—20.) Never was there a more beautiful, nor a more encouraging view of the almighty power of God, as being eminently and most naturally displayed in the almighty power of his love and mercy, through the revelation of the purposes of his redemption in Christ Jesus. And the plea of the humble penitent, grounded upon this promise, shall meet the same compassionate regard and attention. Cruelty and unrelenting severity are the marks of a little mind; the effect of power sensibly restrained, and arising often from the fear of being deprived of such power; but when power is perfect and uncontrolled, it leaves room for the mind to exert its generosity, and to display itself in acts of condescension and kindness. But who can declare the

power and grace of Jesus? who, or what, can bear any comparison with him? His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts: as the heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways of mercy high above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. Who is like unto thee, thou blessed God and Saviour, “pardoning iniquity, and passing by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage: thou retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy.” (Mic. vii. 18, &c.) He spares those who fall submissive at his feet; and, if such be our temper, he will never cast us out nor destroy us: yea, his infinite compassion regards every, the meanest service of his people; and he will not forget any work of faith and labour of love, for his sake and the honour of his cause. But his enemies shall feel his power; his hand shall find out those that hate him.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, having completed his own conquest, will complete the triumph of his people. When by the power of his grace, he hath brought down their heart in submission to himself; when by his compassion and kindness, he hath received them into his protection; he will never forget to be their defence, and their salvation, till he has safely conducted all his people, through the dangers of the wilderness, to the land of promise. If the great enemy, “as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour,” the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall guard his chosen tribe, and be more than equal to all his artifice and his power. The victory he has obtained is the earnest of what he can and will do, in the defence of his people, and an evident demonstration, that “he is able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” His pity is sufficient to bear with all their infirmities, his grace sufficient to pardon all their sins, and his power all-sufficient to protect them from every enemy. “They shall surely gather together against thee,” says he, “but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake, &c. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against

thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Isa. liv. 11—17). What a mighty Saviour is that in whom we trust! Our enemies are many, our strength but small; and our fears, in the view of our own inability and danger, may well be great; but he who was with Israel of old, will still be his church's refuge and protection. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." (Num. xxiii. 21—24. Compare xxiv. 8, 9.)

Thus, when Israel went forth against their numerous enemies, they went forth from conquering to conquer: and why? because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. When, therefore, ready to be discouraged, they said, secretly in the unbelief of their hearts, "These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them?" The answer of God encourages their faith, and commands their confidence. "Thou shalt not be affrighted at them; for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God, and a terrible, &c. The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed." (Deut. vii. 17—24). Thus he leads the chosen tribes safe through the wilderness; and in allusion to this, he calls his people to depart from the world, and begin their march to the heavenly Canaan: "Depart ye, depart ye; go out from thence; for ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight," as though alarmed with the power of surrounding enemies; "for the Lord Jehovah will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rere-ward." (Isa. lii. 12). To realize the power, the grace, the presence of the Redeemer, is sufficient to raise up the dejected, and to animate the desponding. When the penitent believing sinner has fled to him for salvation, and trusted himself in his hand, he has his own promise that he will never reject him, but place

him among his people, and take him under his protection; and when there, what can injure the object of his constant love and care? If God our Saviour be for us, who can be against us to any effectual purpose? We have the proofs of his power, and the pledges of his love, which never can be controverted, and which shall never deceive us. He undertook the work of redemption, when none else could accomplish it; and his own arm hath brought salvation: he hath now made bare that holy arm (in all the displays of its almighty power) in the eyes of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of our God. If he, in consequence of his own victory, is now upon the throne, rejoicing in his conquest, it is but that he may accomplish his design of salvation, in the experience of all his people, and make them conquerors too; yea, more than conquerors, through his love.

If he has almighty power in heaven and in earth, it is that he may give eternal life to as many as were given him; and his promise is without reserve, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. He came to do the will of his Father: and this, says he, is the will of him that sent me, that of those whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but I will raise them up at the last day. I will accomplish that will, in their eternal salvation. Lift up your head, O thou weak and trembling saint! tried, afflicted, tempted, and ready to yield up thy faith and hope to despondency and unbelief: fear not, says your God and Redeemer; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isa. xli. 10.) And again (ver. 14); “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, &c.” (ver. 15, 16.) His wisdom, his love, his power, his care, shall effectually accomplish the designs of his grace, and bring all his people to the glory which he has designed for them. Safe under his conduct, they shall go through all; he will

give power unto the faint, and to them which have no might he will increase strength. The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. xl. 29—31.)

“ Then all the chosen seed
 Shall meet around the throne,
 Shall bless the conduct of his grace,
 And make his wonders known.”

And why? because they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

If the title be referred to the standard of the tribe of Judah, which was ever present in the time of warfare, which was to go forward in all their contests, and under which alone the chosen tribe was to fight the battles of the Lord; so must the Redeemer Jesus be ever present, go forth before his armies, and under him alone must our warfare be conducted: so will he ever afford himself the ensign of his people. There let faith have respect, and let the Christian warfare be ever conducted, looking unto Jesus. If any could take away from us this object of our faith and confidence, we might indeed indulge our fears; and when faith does not behold him, this is the discouraging effect: but this Standard shall never be taken from the conquering armies of the Lord; nor shall they be ever removed from under its protection, but find in him their sure, unchangeable, and unfailing defence. He will be a refuge for us, a present help in every time of trouble.

If the title refer to his descent from the tribe of Judah, it then marks him out to our faith and confidence, in the relation he bears to us as taking the nature of his brethren, as descending from the house of Judah in his manhood in order to accomplish this purpose of salvation for them—“ who is the Seed of David according to the flesh,” and “ of whom, as pertaining to the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all blessed for ever.” (Rom. i. 3, 4; ix. 5.)

It may also denote the peculiarity of his care, as appropriated to his chosen people, who range themselves under the banner of his power and cross. The lion was the banner of the tribe of Judah; they only were under its protection, and claimed it as their own: so also the Lord our Redeemer, in Judah's nature, is Judah's Lion; in the nature of his people, he becomes their salvation, who, thus related to him, and ranging themselves under his care, have a right to expect his protection and defence.

Thus his victories become theirs, and in him they expect to be more than conquerors, through him that loveth them. Yet none but his believing people shall find in him security; none but those who rest under his shade, and fight under his banner, shall enjoy the fruits of his victory. To them alone he becomes salvation, and none shall separate them from his love and triumph. Here is the grand mystery of redeeming love, whereby the all-conquering Jesus secured the conquest of all his redeemed, and will lead them through till he crown them with everlasting conquest, and become himself their exceeding great reward.

Let me go forth then against all my enemies, only in his strength, and fighting under this standard: let me ever keep my eye of faith fixed upon the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Saviour of his church. We have no power against the great enemy that comes against us; and if faith does not hold fast by the Captain of our salvation, our minds will soon waver and become weak, our spirits sink through uncertainty and doubt, and our feeble efforts be easily overcome by the power of superior enemies. When sinking into self-dependence, this is a lesson which we are often taught, and are driven back to the only source of strength and victory, by feeling the insufficiency, and experiencing the failure, of this upon which we are so prone to trust. But here is encouragement to go forward, to stand to our arms, to fight the good fight of faith. Strengthen, therefore, the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; let the fearful in heart be

strong, and fear not. The Lord is on our side, if we are fighting on his: and what are all our enemies to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, God in our nature, Immanuel, God with us; the eminent Descendant of that famous tribe; that thus, becoming one with us in our nature, is pledged for the protection and salvation of all his brethren, the chosen tribe of his inheritance? What are all our sins, corruptions, or temptations, to the power of his arm? The roaring lion can devour those only whom he permits, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah is our defence. Let faith be strong, and trust the Almighty Saviour. Let faith give him the glory, and he will give to faith the victory. Ask we who shall deliver us, when groaning under the bonds of sin and death? Thanks be to God, he giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Fear not, trembling believer; all the terror of his power, his glory, and his indignation, is reserved for thine enemies: all the gracious exertion of that power and glory are guarding thee, and securing thy salvation. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them, &c. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved of the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency? and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. (Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.)

Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and wait with believing expectation thy final triumph over every enemy, by his invincible and almighty power. He shall open the book, and unloose the seals of every providence; conduct his people on, and complete their everlasting conquest around his throne above. Amen and Amen.

ESSAY VI.

The Lamb — The Lamb of God.

WHAT wonderful and what pleasing contrasts unite and abound, in the character of the Lord Jesus Christ! He whom we just now considered in all the majesty, dignity, and power of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is here represented by all the gentleness and meekness of the Lamb, the Lamb of God. We stand surrounded with his glories, yet are not dismayed by their terror. We reverence his Majesty, yet mingle that reverence with love. We adore all his perfections, yet contemplate them with sweetest delight and confidence; and we behold in the dignity of his person, in his wonderful characters and doctrines, in the union of his almighty power and grace, the security of his great salvation; and thus “to them who believe He is precious.”

Now let us behold the Lamb: let us contemplate the Redeemer in this engaging character. The very name spreads a softness and solemnity over the affections, and is calculated to gain the heart, and confirm the confidence of his people. It is a name which occurs five and twenty times in the book of the Revelations, and seems destined to unite the remembrance of his humiliation, with the displays of his Divine glory and mediatorial government. For the term, though illustrating many parts of his character and work, is no doubt chiefly to be applied to his sacrifice and atonement on the cross. “It may be asked, in what sense this application is to be taken. Now there are but two senses that we know of—namely, the literal and figurative—in which any language is to be understood: the literal speaks plainly for itself; and that a correct idea may be conveyed by the figurative sense, a certain analogy must

subsist between the subject under consideration and the figure to which reference is made. The distinctive title of the Lamb of God, taken in a literal sense, conveys no idea to the Christian reader: taken in a figurative sense, it carries with it the idea of “a *Sacrifice for sin* *.” All the sheep offered in sacrifice were typical of the person of Christ, and the great Sacrifice of the Cross: we may therefore consider the appellation as referring to the natural qualities of the Lamb, and especially the circumstances of the Sacrificial Lamb. And may we, while pursuing the various interesting views which arise in the consideration, be enabled by faith to appropriate the consolation which the penitent sinner has a right to receive and rejoice in, when viewing the design of his bearing that character, and which, in that character, he hath accomplished, “to take away the sin of the world!”

1. The lamb, as to its natural qualities, in its simplicity and harmlessness, is always considered as *the symbol of innocence and purity*.—And for this, in an especial manner, is the appellation given to the Man Christ Jesus. For such an High Priest becomes us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. (See Heb. vii. 26—28.) The different animals offered in sacrifice were no doubt intended to represent him in the different views of his character and work. Thus, the filthy goat must be considered as the representation of his state when made sin for us; when considered and treated as a sinner; when standing in the sinner’s stead, with all the sins of all his people imputed to him, and thus bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows. The laborious ox denoted his strength and power, and his laborious sufferings on our account; while the innocent lamb, which was the most usual offering, represented the purity of his nature, which constituted his fitness for the work of atonement, and whereby, being sinless himself, he became a suitable offering for the sins of others. Thus especially the lamb of the passover was to be without blemish, a male of the first year, in the full vigour of its

* Archdeacon Daubeny’s Sermons, p. 453.

strength. (Exod. xii. 5.) Upon this the acceptableness of the sacrifice was rested; and he was pronounced accursed who should offer to the Lord a corrupt thing. (Mal. i. 14.) But in which of these was this description, “WITHOUT BLEMISH,” so realized as in our Jesus, the Righteous One, without sin and without guile, the Holy One of God? Hence, says the Apostle, we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) Conceived by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost, and born of a virgin, he came into the world, without any stain of human impurity necessarily attending the ordinary mode of generation. Thus he was fitted for the work of redemption, and became a suitable Substitute for the guilty; the Just for the unjust. Had he himself been born in sin, he had, like others, been a child of wrath; and unable, therefore, to save himself, much less to save the innumerable multitude of his people. But hence his obedience and his sufferings were voluntary and meritorious, and capable of imputation for the redemption of those for whose salvation they were wrought.

If we trace the history of this Wonderful Person, we behold the spotless purity of his nature displaying itself in the spotless integrity of his life. We see the perfect copy of the love of God, and the love of man. The purity of his heart, his thoughts and designs, is invariably manifested in the purity of his conduct, and in his exact obedience to the command of the Law. He could appeal to his enemies, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” and to his holy Father, “I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John xvii. 4.) We behold his perfect human character displayed in the fifteenth Psalm; and his consequent triumph is annexed to it, in the twenty-fourth Psalm. Here, then, is the person who can stand as my Surety, upon whom the Law could properly have no claim, till he condescended to place himself voluntarily in a situation in which he became responsible

for me, and was able to satisfy every claim in my behalf. Blessed Lamb of God! we adore thee in thine innocence, purity, and righteousness; in thine absolute perfection of pious love to God and benevolent love to man; the fulfilment of every precept of the Law. Thou, therefore, art my righteousness and my hope, as thou hast wrought thy righteousness for me: and herein my Father shall behold thee, as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world.—In the meekness and quietness of his nature, the Lamb is considered as an emblem,

2. *Of meekness under injuries and reproach, and patience in the severity of suffering.*—And how perfectly hath the Lamb-like Redeemer fulfilled this part of the emblematical application! Throughout a life employed in nothing else but acts of good will to man, we behold him constantly enduring the reproaches of his causeless enemies, with all the magnanimity of meekness and forbearance. Despised and rejected of men, he endures the contradiction of sinners against himself. Though laughed to scorn in one instance, we behold him still continuing the miracle of his power and compassion, in healing the ruler's daughter. (Mark v. 38, &c.) And after the discovery of the most infuriate hatred, he still laments over Jerusalem, and bewails their *obstinacy to their own destruction*.

But in that awful scene of suffering, in the garden of Gethsemane, we see the tractable Lamb of God submitting to all his Father's demands, to all the requisitions of the Law, and the claims of justice: and, though his perfect human nature sinks back, and prays, if it were possible, for the removal of the cup, his patient soul submits in perfect acquiescence to the determination of his heavenly Father: "Not my will, but thine, be done." What exquisite patience, what absolute submission, when in the cold night, beneath the load of Divine indignation voluntarily endured, he sweats for us great drops of blood! How patient his surrender into the hands of the traitor and his furious bands! At his word they went back, and fell to the ground: yet he suspended his power, and, yielding him-

self to the ruffian, submits to be seized by those whose life was dependant upon his will. Yea, a miracle of healing, calmly wrought in the moment of his seizure, on one of the infuriated band, will discover his almighty power and infinite compassion; while at the same time he manifests his voluntary submission to the arm that was upraised to detain him. Behold, dragged by the soldiers, he stands before the tribunal! yet, “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:” patiently enduring the bitterness of reproach, he answers not a word, because he stands in our stead, bearing in his innocent body the guilt of our transgression. Meekly, therefore, he yielded his arms to the bands; his back to the smiter; his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and his sacred head to the thorny crown. And, when led away, he ascends the hill of Calvary; we see him indeed led as a lamb to the slaughter, bearing outwardly his cross, but inwardly the heavier weight of our sins, and all the load of Divine wrath and indignation. Voluntarily he stretches out his holy hands, never employed but in the works of benevolence; meekly he submits his sacred feet, never employed but in going round to do good, to the piercing nails; enduring the cross, despising the shame, since he had respect to the recompense of reward, the salvation of his people. Well might he then say, in the language of the prophetic prediction, “I am a worm, and no man; a scorn of men. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out their lip, and shake the head; &c. Many bulls have compassed me,” &c. (Psa. xxii. 6, 7, 12—18: compare also Psa. lxxix. 2--4, 20, 21.) Oh, thou patient Lamb, what sufferings hast thou not endured for me! Let me adore the perseverance of thy patient meekness by which thou hast endured, through it made the atonement for my transgression, and thus procured my hope, and completed the redemption of my soul. Let me thus behold the Lamb of God, and learn to trust in his salvation and to love his Name.

∴ If then we behold him as the sacrificial Lamb, every

circumstance will mark out some excellency of the Redeemer: and, as the Lamb of God, we shall see in him every thing accurately fulfilled that was designed, prefigured, or typified by that. The lamb for these purposes was properly set apart: it was appointed by God, and at length was slain, and burnt upon the altar; a sacrifice for the sins of the people, who were commanded to rejoice in the atonement, and then feasted on the sacrifice; with a sure and grateful persuasion of having all their sins forgiven.

But we behold Jesus the Lamb of God,

Provided from eternity, and appointed of God for the offering, and therefore called the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.—He was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was. In the counsels of eternity, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son; whose goings forth, for the purposes of salvation, were of old from everlasting. “And herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” When Abraham had stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son, the angel of Jehovah directed him to a ram caught in a thicket by its horns, a substitute for the devoted Israelite, and thus fulfilled the expectation of the believing Patriarch. “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering;”—a beautiful emblem of the redemption of the guilty sinner. The sentence is gone forth, the victim is devoted, the hand of justice is as it were stretched out with the destroying sword: but deliver him, says the voice of Mercy; “I have found a ransom:” I have found the substituted offering: the Lamb of God will become the sacrifice, “THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST.” “So,” says he, “I come to do thy will, O God.” The solemn engagement is confirmed, the counsel of peace is between them both; and from eternity his delights were with the sons of men; and the prospect of redeeming work was the joy and triumph of the appointed Redeemer: but in the fulness of time he came to complete the purposes of eternity; and, as the Lamb of God, is fitted by the Spirit of God for his work, in the perfection and pu-

rity of his human nature. When, in the counsels of eternity, he said, “Lo, I come,” he looked forward to this preparation by the power of the Holy Ghost. “Mine ears,” saith he, “hast thou opened;” which the Apostle, divesting of its figure, hath translated, “A body hast thou prepared for me.” By the miraculous operation, therefore, of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin, he is conceived without spot of sin; and from hence endued with all the power, the gifts and graces, of the Holy Spirit, or with whatever was necessary to accomplish the work of redemption. Yea; the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him: *i. e.* not as he is poured out upon his people according to their measure of duties or trials, but in all his infinite fulness, that he might be the Messiah, the anointed One, and the sacred Anointer; that he might have all the fulness of the Spirit for his own work, trials, and triumph; and all the fulness of his gifts and graces to bestow upon his people, for their calling, sanctification, and salvation. Then especially he becomes that Holy One, the holy Child Jesus, the Righteous One, fulfilling all righteousness. Thus he becomes able, having no sin of his own, to bear our sins, and to give that virtue to his suffering for atonement, which might redeem his people from all their iniquities. This he actually did in the bitter sufferings of the garden and the cross, when the blood of this Holy Lamb was poured out beneath this altar, when the holy fire of Divine justice consumed the appointed sacrifice, and found its complete satisfaction for the sins of all his people. Then the Lord bore his testimony to him as his own appointed and accepted sacrifice; and thus he appears in distinction from the others, and eminently above all others, as the Lamb of God. When the full satisfaction was made by him to offended justice; when the accumulated debt of all his people was discharged; when the atonement of sin was actually and perfectly made, he takes away the sins of the world: for “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ

who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?" And for this cause he is the Mediator, &c. (Heb. ix. 13—15.)

These were but shadows of good things to come, and not even the very image of the things: these could never make the comers thereunto perfect; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin: but this our Jesus, our great Priest, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by his one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. x. 1—4, 12—14): and of this God hath given us the assurance, in that he hath raised him from the dead; for as his death was the atonement for sin, his rising again is the security for our justification. Hence it is evident his work is done, is completed, is all-sufficient, is accepted: whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, assuring us, that as the terms of the covenant have been fulfilled, the promises of the covenant must be fulfilled also, in the regeneration of his people, and their deliverance from all their sins. (See Heb. x. 15—23.) "For this (says he) is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, &c. let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

He is therefore acknowledged, and set forth by God to sinners, for their dependance and confidence of faith. Behold the Lamb of God! Him hath God set forth as the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins, &c. (Rom. iii. 25, &c.) Exhibited to the faith of the humble penitent, God himself declares there is salvation in no other; that there is no

other way to himself, no other foundation for a sinner's hope, no other atonement for the sins of men. But in this way, every returning sinner is promised acceptance, and every believer the full supply of all he wants ; since " He, of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

He is then the precious Lamb of God, who, having been sacrificed for sin, hath provided by his dying love for the provision and refreshing of his people ; since his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. He affords, in his dying body, the suitable, the rich, the abundant provision, for the nourishment and the comfort of hungry fainting souls. Faith has the warrant of the Divine word, to apply all his fulness. The penitent sinner has the invitation to all his blessings ; and the believing sinner has the promise of them, and has a right to feed upon them, as much as the offerers under the law to feast upon the sacrifice which they provided, according to, and in the manner of, the Divine appointment, exhibited in the word, set forth in all his dying love, in the sacrament of his church, and as prepared for the enjoyment of faith. The penitent sinner may there come and rejoice in his atonement ; be satisfied that all his sins are put away ; and, being justified by faith, may feed on his love, and the blessings of his salvation ; and, sitting at the table of his love, may have fellowship with Him, and with the Father through him, according to the consoling promise of the Saviour, " We will come unto him, and make our abode with him : " I will love him and manifest myself to him ; I will come to him, and sup with him, and he with me. How often is the sweet enjoyment of faith in his ordinances, feeding upon the abundant provision of this Lamb of God, the delightful anticipation of the full enjoyment of the feast of glory, in the paradise above. Blessed Lamb of God ! thou art the fulness of all the types and shadows ; the fulfilment of that dispensation, and the glory of all the dispensations of God. Thine atoning sacrifice hath provided the richest feast of spiritual blessings : and may my soul constantly feed upon

it by faith, in all thy ordinances, and especially in the sacrament of thy dying love, till I feast with thee in glory!

Come, sinner, behold this Lamb of God: behold him with a deep sense of the guilt of sin; the cause of all his sufferings for thee! Behold him with a look of repentance and godly sorrow, so suited to thy guilt; and behold him with the look of lively faith, which shall fill thy soul with the relish for all his blessings. What a heavenly Lamb, what a sacred victim, what a sacrifice is bleeding upon the cross, that altar of atonement for thy sins! How bitter the suffering, how severe the indignation, how consuming the fire of wrath, which sin, thy sin, hath brought upon him, even unto death! Well may we here discern the guilt and consequences of our transgression, and exclaim, What hath sin done! How glorious the Divine person who there assumes this character, having assumed our nature, that he might redeem us from our sins! Where, then, shall the guilty and impenitent find mercy, who reject this heavenly appointed offering, when God spared not his own Son, but laid on him the iniquity of us all. The sinner, condemned already by the Law, must for ever remain under that sentence, if he fly not to this hope of the Gospel, the sacrifice of the cross. But can thine heart break with the terrors of the Law, or melt with the grace of redemption? Behold them, then, displayed in their uttermost extent, at the cross of Jesus. Look at the awful scene of his sufferings, and tremble at the wrath of God; or rather, look upon him whom thy sins have pierced, who condescends there to bear them for thee, and melt with contrition and penitential sorrow.

Behold, thou self-righteous Pharisee! behold, with a look of conviction, this Lamb of God, who alone can take away the sin of the world. If righteousness could come by the Law, and if there were a law which could give life, verily righteousness should have come by the Law: but if so, why this wonderful display of justice and of grace in the death of Christ? If thou art going about to establish thine own righteousness, thou art frustrating the grace of

God; for surely there could be no need of such a provision of grace, and such a substituted sacrifice, if, by any means, a sinner could have wrought out his own salvation. While you lay another foundation, you are but deserting Christ; denying the necessity of his work; reflecting on the wisdom, the goodness, and the glory of God, in making such a provision; and, in a word, making God a liar, who hath declared that life and salvation are in him alone; that eternal life is his own free gift; and, that this life is only “in his Son.” The actual sacrifice of the Lamb of God, is the plainest proof, not only of our guilt, but of our inability to offer any sacrifice of atonement for our own redemption; and of the necessity of seeking and finding it in Christ alone. May the Lord bring us to seek all our salvation here, and to make him all our desire. Then, behold this Lamb of God! Thou contrite penitent, with the look of faith, behold the greatness of his love, his love to sinners; that he might cleanse them with his blood, justify them in his righteousness, bring them near to God, reconcile them to the Father, and become the author to them of all their blessings. Shall he who thus provided and wrought out redemption for them when sinners, refuse them or cast them out when seeking, with an humble heart, an interest in that redemption? Shall he deny, to any penitent sinner, the blessings he purchased with his blood for sinners? From the nature and design of his work and of his sufferings, we might argue the certainty of a returning sinner’s acceptance with him; and from the Divine acknowledgment of his work, the certainty of his acceptance with the Father. But his own promise, and the promise of the Father, place the truth beyond a doubt: “Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37); and “God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (Heb. vi. 17, 18.) Let,

then, thy faith grow strong; come with all thy guilt and fears, and lay them at the foot of the Cross, and “behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world:” wash thy robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb; so shalt thou stand for ever before the throne, among the number of the redeemed.

Believer, behold this Lamb of God with a look of gratitude and love; of confidence and unchanging reliance. What can He not do, or what will He not give, who hath thus given himself, and thus obeyed and suffered for the salvation of his people. Behold, in the very name, the gentleness and the loving-kindness of his mediatorial character. In the days of his flesh, it seemed to be his peculiar design to exemplify the lamb-like compassion of his heart? Who ever came to him, and was sent empty away? The poor, the sick, the needy, yea, the poor demoniac, found his pity and his help. (Matt. iv. 23, 24.) As with patient meekness he bore all for his people, so with the same gentleness and forbearance he bears with all the perverseness which appears in them, and with all the ingratitude he experiences from them: he bears with them in their lowest estate, their ignorance and folly; he bears with their subsequent wanderings and backslidings, their lukewarmness and their neglect; he pleads with his Father, “Let them alone this year also,” &c.; and, with gentleness and love, he welcomes them, when they return again to a sense of their folly and a desire of his healing grace. Consult thy experience, O believer, and it will testify to thee that “his ways are not as our ways,” &c. &c.; that “like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Nay, “can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee,” &c. (Isa. xlix. 15.) What cannot he endure, what cannot he forgive, who on the cross interceded for his murderers? Was ever lamb-like compassion similar to this? But this is indeed repeated,

every day to those who, by their perverseness and ingratitude, are crucifying him afresh. Fear not, weak believer, when tried, when tempted, when sensible of and lamenting thy backsliding and unworthiness. You are ready to think he can never regard you, but must be tired out with your folly, weakness, and ingratitude: but he can bear; he hath borne long, and will, even to the end, till he hath purified thee from all. Though we greatly need such pity and compassion, we cannot need more than he is able to exercise, or than he hath exercised and manifested to his servants from the beginning. What an encouraging character to the weak believer! Let faith then always behold and remember Jesus as the Lamb of God. For it is one of the most consoling considerations to the believer, that he still bears the same character on the throne above. Though invested with almighty power to carry on and complete the purposes of providence, yet still he appears in the same character, that he may bear with his people, present his atonement for them, and intercede on their behalf. When the prophet beheld in vision the world above, and the eternal throne, and saw the book of Divine providence to be unfolded in the future generations of mankind; he was directed to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as alone able to accomplish the vast and eternal purposes: but when turning his eyes to behold the glorious Person, in the midst of the throne he discerned a Lamb as it had been slain. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Lamb of God, unite in the same wondrous Person, to carry on and complete the purposes of God, for the salvation of his people, with almighty power and sweetest meekness and compassion. Let us then join their joyful song; “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” &c. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour,

and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 9, &c.) He is worthy to bear the equal honour of the Divine nature; and therefore, let every creature in heaven and earth proclaim blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Let heaven and earth repeat, Amen.

ESSAY VII.

The Roe and Hart.

THE churches of the Old and New Testament unite together in their view of the Lord Jesus: the former looked upon him as represented by the most striking figures; the latter beholds the display of his acts and refulgent glory, though at present only the earnest of the brighter vision of heaven above. To each, therefore, he is alike precious, the chief among ten thousand, above all blessing and praise: he indeed has received a name above every name; and all the choicest things in nature put together are but the shadow of his perfections. The beautiful emblems which are now the subject of our consideration represent truly, though faintly, his glories and his excellency; and therefore, we find the church of old earnestly entreating him to bear and fulfil the character. “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved; and be thou *like a Roe, or a young Hart*, upon the mountains of Bether.” (Song ii. 17.) And again; “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a *Roe, or a young Hart*, upon the mountains of spices,” (viii. 14.); come over every mountain of separation, till appearing upon the mount of glory. This, considered as the language of ancient believers, may denote the earnest desire of the Old-Testament church for his quickly coming in the flesh, and in the Gospel dispensation, alluded to in the second chapter: (Song ii. 10—14): and as the language of present believers, it may refer to his coming for the salvation of his church, the consolation of the hearts of his people, for the cheering glances of his favour in his ordinances, or his coming in all his glory. “Lo,” says he, when closing his season of revelation, “I

come quickly. Even so," says the church, "come, Lord Jesus."

The word צבי, translated "the roe," is most evidently not that animal, but the antelope, the most beautiful species of the capreæ, and which are represented beautiful in their eye and figure: so that the name has been applied to females as a compliment to their beauty, and is the same as Dorcas, as being exceedingly lovely and pleasant; quick of sight, rapid and swift in their motions, cheerful, and readily leaping to a great distance; and the ליש, the hart, or the stag, is remarkable for much the same qualities. The natural antipathy between the roe and the serpent, though used to represent the hatred between Christ and the old serpent, is not much credited; nor their very great longevity. And as to what some writers say of their being good for food, and most pleasant to the appetite; that is common to them with other things, and does not appear to be designed by the sacred writers. But their beauty, together with their quick, pleasant, and delightful motions, seems to be the principal point of the allusion. They may therefore be considered as affording us a pleasing view of the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory; in the readiness of his work, and the riches of his grace; and as such the church entreats his appearance, and his quick approach over every mountain of Bether, or of separation. (Song ii. 17.)

The roe and the hart, in their excellency and beauty, may suitably represent,

1. *The glory, excellency, and beauty of the person of the Redeemer.*—In this his name is Wonderful; and the more he is contemplated throughout eternity, the more will his name appear suitable to his wonderful person. He has been eternally the elect and precious in the sight of God: and though, in his humiliation, he was despised and rejected of men, he is the eternally beloved of the Father; and in his exaltation he has received a name which is above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;" and the eye of faith will ever discover such beauty and excellency in him, as to render him the

chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. In his Divine nature, his glories are the glories of the Godhead; and, being infinite, are far beyond our contemplation and our conception. In his human nature he possesses all the excellencies and beauties of its perfect state. But it is in his person as Immanuel, in which he unites both those natures in one person, never more to be separated, that the believer chiefly delights to contemplate him. Here he shines in the brightness of glory, and the express image of his Father's person: glorious in his form, incomprehensible in his excellency; exalted to supreme dignity, power, and authority in his state; and worthy of supreme adoration, love, confidence, and praise. The mediatorial character and offices, which in that wonderful person he sustains, render him precious indeed to those who believe. Say, believer, how precious he appears in your view, when you consider him in what he has done for you, in what he is now doing, and in what he is able to do; when you consider the blessings which are treasured up in him, the characters and relation which he bears; what he is for his people, what he is to them, and all that he has promised to effect for their everlasting salvation and glory. What can compare with your almighty, all-gracious Redeemer! He is the archetype of all that is exalted, beautiful, and glorious; of all excellencies and perfections: and in all these he is yours, and you are his. He standeth behind the wall, said the church of old; he looketh forth at the window, he sheweth himself through the lattice; that is, He gives, in the types and figures of his ordinances, the glances of his excellency. There the church still catches a glance of the infinite excellency of her beloved, and faith discerns somewhat of the glories of his person, his character, and his offices; and feels the sweetness of his love, till it excite the most earnest longing of desire for repeated manifestations, for more and more full discoveries of his love and grace. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my beloved, and be like unto a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether!"

Though we, under the Gospel dispensation, have to bless God for clearer manifestations of his beauty and his glory; though we have no vail to penetrate, no type, no figure, to obstruct while it discovered; yet still we see but through a glass darkly, and have not the full vision of his glory (1 Cor. xiii. 10): it is yet comparatively but through the window, and through the lattice. The display of his unveiled excellencies, no mortal eye can yet behold. When the Prophet Isaiah beheld the vision of his throne, he cries out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts:" and when the Apostle John was favoured with the vision of his person in his exaltation, he fell at his feet as dead. Now faith, though with open face, beholds but as in a glass, the glory of the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) This indeed changes the believer into the same image from glory to glory; but soon this imperfect view shall yield to the immediate vision of his excellency: these imperfect powers of vision shall be changed for those which can behold, contemplate, admire, and enjoy him for ever: Then we shall have a more perfect understanding of all his glory, when Christ who is our life shall appear, and when "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The roe, as an emblem of Christ in the loving tenderness of its nature,

2. *Represents the complacency and pleasure which he feels in all his engagements and undertakings for his people; the love which he bears towards them, and the delight which he has in them.*—The emblem is used for this purpose in the Book of Proverbs (v. 19); "Let him be unto thee as the loving hind and pleasant roe." Thus the blessed Jesus delights in every part of the work of his redemption, from his undertaking in eternity to his exaltation again to his glory. Thus he delights in whatever relates to the salvation of his people, to the calling of them by grace, and to their exaltation with him to behold and participate his glory. This is evidently the leading idea of the allusion. From eternity his heart was set upon

his redeemed. When he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was ; when there were no depths nor fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, or the hills brought forth, before the earth was formed or the heavens prepared ; then he rejoiced in the view of the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men. (Prov. viii. 22—31.)

He is, therefore, represented by the Psalmist, when sacrifice and offering were declared insufficient, and unacceptable to the Father, in the great work of redeeming sinners, as cheerfully and readily offering himself to the work : Behold me : “ Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God.” Pleased and delighted with his undertaking, in the fulness of time he came, “ made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbles himself, becomes of no reputation, takes upon him the form of a servant, and is made in the likeness of men. (Phil. ii. 6, 7, &c.)

How suitable the representation ! The bounding roe does not run over the hills, nor skip with greater alacrity over the spicy mountains, than the Almighty Redeemer left his throne of glory, and descended to earth for the salvation of his people. As in this state of his humiliation, he came to do the will of his Father ; so well pleased was he in the work itself, that, though attended with the deepest suffering which human nature ever endured, he represents it as his very meat and drink to accomplish it. His sufferings, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem, were the chosen subject of consideration, when once only the heavenly visitants Moses and Elias conversed with him on the mount of transfiguration. (Luke ix. 31.) And when Peter, in his love to his person and zeal for his glory, earnestly wishes that he might avoid such sufferings and disgrace, with holy indignation he calls him his adversary : “ Get thee behind me, satan ; for thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” His cross was the object of his most ardent desire : “ I

have a baptism to be baptised with ; and how is my soul straitened until it be accomplished ?” He glories to enter upon, to bear, and to pass through, this deepest scene of ignominy, torture, and death, that he might finish the work of satisfaction, propitiation, and atonement for sin, and procure eternal life for his people ; for he endured the cross, despising the shame, since he had respect unto this recompense of the reward. But as he delighted in the work itself, so also in its application, and in the bestowal of all its blessings upon his redeemed people. The love he bare to miserable sinners from eternity, though unworthy and polluted in themselves, is so astonishing, as represented in his word, that it is difficult for the faith of the humble penitent to receive or to rest upon it. He loves to receive the returning penitents whom he has bought with his blood ; and when they come near to him, and are acting faith upon him, he loves to pour out his choicest blessings upon them. “ I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. xxxi. 3.) The delight he enjoys in his people, when living near to him in faith, and in the observance of his ordinances, is represented in that Song of Songs, the song of love between Christ and his people, by the richest and most interesting allusions : “ O, my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs,” says the spiritual Spouse of his church, “ let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” (Song ii. 14.) “ Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse ; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.” (iv. 9.) And the church returns the spiritual ardour, with the longing desire after his unchanging affection : “ Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm : for love is strong as death ; jealousy is cruel as the grave ; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” (Song viii. 6, 7.) What mutual estimation, desire, and delight ! The penitent backslider shall witness, therefore,

the unchangeableness of his grace: “ I have surely (says the Lord) heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus ; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke : turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the Lord my God. Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him : I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.” (Jer. xxxi. 18—20.) His love, which has been from everlasting, shall therefore be to everlasting, and to himself the most delightful. “ I will give them (says he) one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and their children after them ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.” (Jer. xxxii. 39—41.) And again ; “ The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. iii. 17) : “ and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” (Isa. lxii. 5.)

Thus with delight he draws men to keep, to bless, to satisfy, to abundantly supply them, to manifest himself to them as he does not unto the world ; and finds as great delight in communicating, as they in receiving, the rich tokens of his love. O come, O turn, thou gracious Friend of sinners, thou Bridegroom of thy church ! and “ be like unto the roe, or to the young hart, upon the mountains of Bether.” But as the result of this delight and love, the leading idea in the allusion is, no doubt,

3. *The cheerful, ready performance of all his designs of love, and its ready manifestation to his people, represented by the quickness of the motion of this animal, and the delight it seems to take in it.—Its velocity and rapidity*

of motion was proverbial. Asahel is said to be “as light of foot as a wild roe.” (2 Sam. ii. 18.) “He maketh my feet like hind’s feet,” saith the Psalmist, “and setteth me upon my high places.” (Psal. xviii. 33.) Some of them are said to leap sixty feet at a bound*. Nothing can more beautifully and justly represent the ready love of the Redeemer, rising above every obstacle, surmounting every impediment, and passing over every difficulty between the design and the execution, than the hart bounding over the mountains and over the hills, without any appearance of toil or fatigue: yea, it pursues its course with perfect ease and apparent delight; and so love is always ready, and, according to its degree and ardour, moves quickly towards its object, or the accomplishment of its design.—Let us here behold the dear Redeemer

Quickly overcoming every impediment and difficulty in his own work of love.—Who but himself could ever have performed this labour of immensity, or surmounted the mountains of difficulty in the way? Neither the strength of men nor of angels could have availed; but before this great Zerubbabel every mountain becomes a plain. (Zech. iv. 7.) How great, how immense, the difficulty to fulfil a violated law, to endure the severity of justice, and the wrath of God; to offer a full atonement for the sins of men; to overcome all the powers of hell; to die, in order to become the Author of life! But our glorious, our infinite Immanuel, feels no difficulties, admits no discouragement in the curses of the law, in the death of the cross, or in combating all the powers of darkness, through the ardour and the resolution of love. Frequently did he manifest his readiness to the work before his incarnation, by appearing in the human form to believers, patriarchs and prophets; and though the time of his coming seemed, to the anxious expectation and desire of ancient believers, to be long delayed, a trying exercise to their patience and their faith; yet, in the fulness of time, he comes, “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem us who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” He delays not a

* See Bochart “de Animalibus.”

moment beyond the time appointed, in the purposes and promises of God and the predictions of his prophets. He hastens readily to clothe himself in our nature; to become a Babe in the manger; the Child born and the Son given: he hastens on to every work of labour, sorrow, and suffering, anticipating them with delight, nor ceasing till he had finished his arduous undertaking. Surely, in the figurative language of prediction, “He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;” so readily does he come, so quickly does he surmount every difficulty, when he comes to apply the blessings of his redemption to the hearts of his people, or to visit them with the manifestation of his grace and favour. As no difficulties could prevent his undertaking and executing the work of redemption, no more shall they prevent his applying the grace of redemption, and bestowing the blessings of redemption upon his people. Mountains of guilt, of opposition, and of difficulty, lie in the way, which nothing but infinite love could overcome: yet he rejoices to bound over the highest in his ways of mercy to the chief of sinners; and where sin abounds, grace shall much more abound. What corruption of nature, what depravity of heart, what rebellion of disposition, what obstinacy of will, what perverseness in practice, has he not had to contend with and to overcome, in the calling and the conversion of all his people! What heart, except his who has infinite purity and compassion, but would have turned away with indignation, and deserted the design of benefiting such rebellious sinners! But love bounds over all, and still pursues its undeviating course, with all the ardour of desire and rapture of delight. He comes in his Gospel, in his ordinances, and by his Spirit, and then he leaves all behind him, that he may make them his people, and delight over them to do them good. “Behold,” says he, “I stand at the door,” all impediments put behind, and knock with desire of entrance: “if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev. iii. 20.) —Thus he comes with cheerful haste for

The deliverance and consolation of his people.—Moun-

tains of unbelief, ingratitude, and provocation are passed over by his insuperable love. He leaps over the hills of their lukewarmness, backslidings, and remaining corruptions, resolved that nothing shall separate them from his love; and nothing but such love could ever persevere to save his people. When he calls by his grace, and the humble penitent returns, he flies, like the father of the returning prodigal, to welcome his rebellious child: when a great way off, he beholds him; and, while his heart is moved with compassion, he runs to take him in his arms, and restore him to his family and his inheritance. When the guilty backslider laments his wandering, he hastens to heal his backsliding, to receive him graciously, and love him freely. (Hos. xiv. 4.) When his tried and tempted people are ready to faint and despair, he hastens to fulfil his promise, with every temptation to make a way to escape; and, though the enemy come in like a flood, the Spirit Jehovah will lift up a standard against him. How rich, how sweet, how ready, are the manifestations of his love in his ordinances, while there he waits to be gracious, and is exalted to have mercy! His people there see his going, the going of their God and King in the sanctuary, to revive and bless them. Rich and ready are his discoveries of returning light and favour to the deserted soul; though, when his sensible comforts are justly withdrawn, and he had hid the light of his reconciled countenance, in just chastisement for filial disobedience, it is but a small moment his displeasure can endure, till he returns to console and bless with everlasting love. “For a small moment,” says he, “have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.” (Isa. liv. 6—10.)

Then he hastens to bestow the rich supplies of his grace, corresponding too with the necessities and spiritual desires of his people. “Ask (says he), and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

“ I will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy crying.” (Isa. xxx. 19.) When they pray, I will hear: while they are yet praying, I will answer them. As he is able to supply all our need, for the riches of glory are in him, he will make all grace abound towards us, that we may have all-sufficiency in all things. His strength is made perfect in our weakness; and therefore the Apostle gloried in infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. The time of trouble, and the hour of affliction, are the peculiar seasons when he delights to shew his power, and to discover his all-sufficiency: he is near, and not afar off, that he may be the refuge in the due time of trouble. When his people need his help and deliverance, he never stays beyond his own time, though he may exceed their anxious and impatient wishes; and his time is the best time: he will quickly fulfil and realize his promises; and though he seem to delay, his delays are only in order to magnify his power, his grace and his faithfulness, and to render his own hand more observable and evident. But he comes quickly, much sooner than we deserve, and often sooner than our guilty or unbelieving fears would permit us to expect: he hastens over every mountain of separation, and again reveals his loving-kindness and his truth. The gloomy scenes of death cannot keep him from his people: he was conversant with all its most gloomy terrors for us, and has overcome them; and he will hasten there to shew his victory, and make his people triumphant. “ When thou passest through the waters,” says he, “ I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” The good Shepherd, with his rod and his staff (the emblems of his pastoral care), will there support his servants, and through the valley of the shadow of death will lead them in tranquillity, confidence, and peace. “ I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee,” is a promise that secures his ready help, and constant presence, in every time of need; a promise which his grace can realize, and which his

Faithfulness will fulfil. Nor shall the things which they most dread ever separate him from his believing people. Guilty impediments, innumerable and insuperable but to his love, are in the way; and while his people feel and lament over them, they adore that love unspeakable, which can thus rise above, and bound over, all their sins, to bring its blessings to their hearts. Men in ignorance and unbelief are indeed insensible of this, and therefore consider his love and his salvation as a matter of course. But the humble believer, convinced, enlightened, and renewed, admires his pardoning mercy: it is above the heavens in its height; and his truth to his promise is beyond the unsettled cloud in its unchangeableness, or it never could have risen over our sins, or extended itself to our soul's salvation. With this humbling view, the believing soul admires and delights in his love. We love him, because he hath so loved us; and his love manifested to the heart constrains the heart to loving obedience. "Draw me," says the soul, "we will run after thee. The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee." (Song i. 3, 4.)—"It is thy grief, O believer, that thou dost not, canst not, love so well, so warmly as thy beloved: Christ comes to thee, skipping like the hart, or the young roe, upon the mountains of spices; while thy love to Christ creeps like the worm, in the unwholesome valley." (*Is. Ambrose.*) The believer longs, therefore, after the sweet manifestations of this love, and, once enjoyed, he cannot be satisfied without it, whatever else he may possess. (See Song iii. 1, and v. 2.) And when faith is in exercise, it draws forth the longing desires after the eternal enjoyment of his presence, upon the mountains of spices, the heavenly Eden, the paradise above. Quickly will the Redeemer bound over all the impediments of time,

To meet his people in the regions of eternal glory.—This earthly and corrupted state, this guilty and polluted nature, could not prevent that love from redeeming, from hasten-

ing to the relief of his people ; could not prevent that love from being victorious over all ; but soon will he present them without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that they may be holy and without blemish. Not only the immortal soul shall shine in the Redeemer's glory, but " he shall change these vile bodies, and make them like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." The time of waiting, through the successive generations of mankind, appears long to the church, in its present state of warfare and militant sorrows, but in the end shall appear but as a moment in comparison of eternity ; and it is eternity which guides his conduct, and directs his purposes of love. Every difficulty seems placed in the way of such sinners, appearing in such glory ; or, of his coming to such sinners in the fulness of his glory, to make them partakers of that glory with him ; but all is easy to Almighty Power, to purify these polluted souls, to change these corrupted bodies, to exalt and elevate these feeble powers, and make them fit for his presence, for immortality and life ; and he will accomplish the purposes of his love. The terrors of the passage sometimes alarm the believer, and detain his desires and wishes below : he knows not how to pass the gloomy way, or to realize the glory which is above ; but faith discerns the presence of the Lord. As faith is in exercise, the shadows flee away, and the prospect opens before him. He has a desire to depart and be with Christ : he looks for and hastens unto the coming of the Son of Man ; and never will he be satisfied till he awakes up in his likeness. With this desire, earth appears but a vanity in all its glory ; and his sins, which unfit him for, and separate him from, his presence, are most hateful : he rises above his earthly affections into spiritual views and joys ; and, in the faint enjoyment of his presence on earth, anticipates the happiness of his unveiled presence in glory everlasting. Every heart which now finds its delight in him shall then be satisfied with the full enjoyment ; and the visits of his grace shall be exchanged for the manifestations of his glory.

Has he come over the mountains and hills of difficulty, to accomplish the work of redemption? has he come over every hill of separation, to call us effectually by his grace? has his love surmounted every mountain of our sins, unbelief, provocation, and ingratitude? has he bounded over every craggy rock, mountain of Bether, or separation, to discover his sovereign mercy and his covenant love to our souls? how does the sweet communion of his grace make us often long for the full fruition of his glory! He has not implanted this desire in the heart to disappoint us: no, soon will he appear from heaven without sin unto salvation; soon will he come bounding over those heavenly hills of spices (Song viii. 14), the hills of light, of joy, and of glory. Then shall all his glory be seen, be known, and be enjoyed. Blessed Jesus! we adore thy amazing power and unspeakable love which rise above every impediment of corruption or of time. He comes to welcome his people to his eternal kingdom, and nothing shall prevent his approach; and he says, Surely I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen and Amen.

ESSAY VIII.

Brother.

THOUGH the term Brother does not expressly occur in application to Jesus through the sacred Scriptures, yet it is implied in many passages, and is the very spirit of the whole. In the language of Prophecy, he speaks of his servants as his brethren; and under this engaging name, he promises to reveal to them the glory of the Father, and the designs of his redemption (Ps. xxii. 22, and lxix. 8); and, in his first message to his disciples after his resurrection, he kindly acknowledges the relation: "Go," says he, "tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee; and there shall they see me." (Matt. xxviii. 10.) Believers are, therefore, said to be predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son: they are the sons of God by adoption and grace, and become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. No term of relationship can be more endearing than this; nothing can bring the blessed Jesus nearer to our view, nor present him to our faith in a more pleasing and encouraging manner; nothing can make the Saviour more precious, than that he should thus condescend to become like me in all things; as the Seed of the woman in human nature, that I might be like him, as through him the child of God.

It is the most endearing and animating ground of consolation, under all the troubles, afflictions, and temptations of life, to remember, that Jesus, in whom I trust, was once like me; that he thus became our (בן) Kinsman-Redeemer; that he might, in taking human nature as my Brother, lay himself under an obligation to perform that work of brotherly love, which, in the counsels of eternity,

he had voluntarily engaged to perform, and which as God-man alone he could be able to perform, to redeem my soul to God. Here then let me again contemplate his amazing condescension, his astonishing loving-kindness, his unchangeable faithfulness, and rejoice in the benefit and blessings which, from such a near and dear relation, he stands engaged, and is graciously inclined, to bestow upon me, an undeserving sinner!

The term is, no doubt, expressive of the relation which he bears to his people, by taking a body and soul of the very same nature as theirs, in the very same state of debasement, alike in all things but its pollution; of that tenderness, and compassion, and sympathy, which belongs to the relation, and of the rights and privileges which are connected with it, constituting them fellow-heirs with him of his kingdom and glory. To become their Brother, he took upon him the same nature, a body of the same form and substance; a soul of the same passions and affections; and in body and soul subjected to the same infirmities and sorrows as ours.

1. His body was the same as ours, *in its form and substance*; the same flesh and the same blood. “The Word was made flesh;” and “he redeemed the church with his blood.”

This is evidently the ground of argument which the Apostle takes in Heb. ii. He first takes an interesting view of the state of man, as represented in Psalm viii.; as made a little lower (or, as the margin, for a little lower time) than the angels; but crowned with glory and honour, and placed over all the works of the Divine hand, with all things put in subjection under his feet. But this, he tells us, is at present true only of the Lord Jesus, the Second Head of man, who condescended to this state for us, and for the suffering of death is now actually crowned with that glory, as the Forerunner of his people. Therefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren; for as the adopted children of God out of mankind are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise, or rather in like manner, took

part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And since in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, he refused not to take on him the seed of Abraham, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Heb. ii. 6, to the end.) That the Word was made flesh, is an expression of peculiar and extensive import: the term "flesh," as applied to our nature, is always used as a term of degradation; it is applied to that nature only as it is under the effect of sin; and, as used in reference to Christ, implies that he laid himself under the necessity of the same humble and earthly mode of living as that to which man is now subjected through his depravity and corruption, though himself without sin; that he felt the same wants, was exposed to the same necessities, and needed the same supplies of food and sleep, for the support and refreshment of his animal frame, which had equal tendency to decay, had it not been for the Divine power supporting and preserving it. That he who was the Eternal Jehovah should be placed in such a state as this, is indeed a mystery; and the Apostle justly calls it "*the great mystery of godliness.*" But it could be no mystery at all, if it were not a fact. He was as truly the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Offspring of Jesse and of David, as he was the Mighty Redeemer; he was the Child born and the Son given, who was the Mighty God. As his nature, therefore, was the same as ours, he appears in the same circumstances of humiliation; without any appearance of superior lustre or dignity; but in the spiritual lustre of his holiness, authority, purity, and perfect righteousness; or, in some of those peculiar displays of Divine power in the miraculous works which he wrought. When angels proclaim his birth, descending from above, with all its consequences to mankind; while the songs of heaven

proclaim him as the Saviour, Christ the Lord ; he appears on earth no more than a child, an helpless child, wrapped in swaddling bands, lying in a manger, and needing the support of a mother's arm, and the cherishing supplies of a mother's breast. Like us, he grows in wisdom and in stature : age and time added to the growth of the body, and to the wisdom of the mind ; while in his Divine nature he filled all things, and was omnipresent and omniscient. Still he grows up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ; and as to his outward appearance, he had neither form nor comeliness, nor beauty, that he should be desired. It might have been asked of him, in his outward form, as was asked of the church of old, " What is thy beloved more than another beloved ?" What an infinite act of condescension and of love ! The very nature I bear, he condescended to bear also ; and to appear in all its circumstances of degradation, without any superior dignity or honour, glory, power, or splendour, that he might not be ashamed to call us brethren.

Here, if I believe, I am compelled to admire and wonder at the fact, that the Son of God should become the Son of man ; that he who bore all the glory of heaven, should bear all the miseries of earth ; that he who was the brightness of the Father's glory, should in all things be like us ; that he who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, should empty himself, and take upon himself the form of a servant ; is more than human credulity could believe, if the express declaration of God himself had not made it the basest infidelity to disbelieve. That He who was from eternity with God, and was God, should even think upon sinners, upon rebels, is most amazing ; but that he should so think of them, as to purpose their redemption, yea, still more, so think of them as to become himself their Redeemer, their Kinsman, their Brother in human nature, surpasses all other subjects of amazement. Well may his name be called Wonderful (or Secret) ; for it is unsearchable to all the wisdom of men or of angels, and will be unsearchable and unknown throughout eternity ! Great is the mystery of godliness ; but it was

a fact, God was manifested in the flesh. But as his body was of the same nature, the same flesh and blood, subject to the same mode of living, needing the same supply, and equally tending to corruption, but by the interposition of Divine power, according to the covenant promise; so,

2. *His human soul was subject to the same natural affections, and the same appetites and passions, with this only difference, as being undefiled with sin.*—This may indeed appear surprising when we consider his person, in the union of the Divine nature: and yet it is an essential part of his humiliation, and essentially necessary to constitute him a Brother of the human race,—in all things like unto his brethren.

We see him, therefore, fulfilling every relation which he bore upon earth, in the full perfection of the human character. With all those affections, which were suitable to the discharge of those relations, under the regulation of the fear of God, and of supreme love to his heavenly Father, from his conversation with the doctors in the Temple, where his incomparable wisdom was manifested, he returned in submission to his parents, and was, we are told, obedient to them, as the perfect example of filial reverence and subjection. There is every reason to suppose that he condescended, even to the humble occupation of his father; and as he manifested the affections which were suitable to every one relation, we may be assured that his obedience was the effect of that filial affection which was suited to the situation in which he submitted to be placed. Towards his disciples he manifested a friendly and brotherly affection; for the Apostle John he seems to have entertained a peculiar friendship; and to Lazarus and his family he had no doubt discovered the same, or his disciples could not have used such expressive language, when they informed him of his illness; “He whom thou lovest is sick:” nor would the sacred writer have told us, in such an affecting manner, that at the tomb of Lazarus “JESUS WEPT.” His filial affection towards his mother was the only feeling that he discovered upon the cross, beside his ardour to accomplish the will of

his heavenly Father. This led him, even there, to commit her to the care of his beloved disciple; and so to direct their attention to each other, that from henceforth the disciple should regard her as his own mother, and that she should expect from him the attention and protection of a son. That disciple himself thus pathetically describes the interesting circumstance: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." (John xix. 26, 27.) It was the same sentiment of general pity and humane compassion that led him to weep over Jerusalem, and lament the unhappy fate to which it was exposed by rejecting the day of its visitation, and which he knew would inevitably involve it in such awful desolation. These may be considered as the only specimens of his usual disposition and temper as a man amongst his brethren of mankind; and they give us such a view of his human character, as may well astonish us at his condescension. That he who possessed a nature so infinitely exalted above all our natural affections, should condescend to be thus like us, must exalt his character as a man upon earth, and excite still more our admiration and regard.—But further, as our Brother in human nature, both in body and soul,

3. *He became liable to the same infirmities, weaknesses, troubles, sorrows, afflictions, and death.*—This indeed was the very cause of his appearing in our nature, that he might be a suffering man, the man of sorrows; for himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. This appears to be the fact: he begins his sufferings at his birth, and is cast out from the womb; he grows up in poverty, obscurity, and neglect; he prepares for his public ministry by a scene of the fiercest temptations, and enters upon it with every circumstance of discouragement. In the progress of his work, he has not where to lay his head. He suffered, being tried and tempted; yea, was in all points tried, like as we are, though without sin. The affecting

description of the Prophet is such, as cannot but excite every feeling and sensibility of the heart: it leads us into scenes of the most complicated distress of body and of soul; when he was wounded, and bruised, and chastised, oppressed, afflicted, and contemned, and labouring under the bitterest agony, by the reproaches of men, and the sword of the Almighty, in making his soul an offering for sin, in bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, that by his stripes we might be healed. Thus he took our nature, not only in its form and substance, but in all its present circumstances of degradation, with all the consequences of sin, and with all the curses of the law; “made under the law, to redeem us who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” The death of the cross was the last scene of his humiliation on earth, when his body was committed to the silent grave, and his soul descended to the invisible region of departed spirits: nor can there be a doubt but his body would soon have felt the effect of corruption, had not the covenant promise secured the interposition of Almighty Power to raise that body from the grave, to bid the departed spirit return, and reanimate the sleeping dust; and, both united, to rise and ascend to the kingdom of glory. What can more demand our admiration, than such humiliation as this! Jesus Jehovah is Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, equal to the Father as touching his Godhead; but the brother of human nature, the offspring of man, vailing all his glories in every circumstance of poverty and affliction, of sorrow and of death; undistinguished but by the eye of faith, from the lowest of the human race; nor seen, except as his works of power discovered the presence of the Godhead.—O my soul, contemplate and adore this mystery; this unsearchable mystery of Divine wisdom and love! But of this wonderful fact, the cause was in the love of his heart; and we may observe, that as the Brother of his people, ever since he was set up from everlasting, when his delights were with the sons of men (Prov. viii. 31),

1. *He has borne a brotherly affection towards them,*

in engaging in their cause, and carrying on all their concerns.—As he loved them with an everlasting love, so he seems, under the Old-Testament dispensation, to have delighted to anticipate his future appearance, by frequently assuming the form of that nature, in which he was thereafter in reality to appear on earth; and in this manner to have transacted all the concerns of his church, under that dispensation. But when he came in the body of his flesh, he then actually subjected himself to all the duties of the brotherly relation; for though he could be under no obligation to enter upon such a state, yet having entered in human nature, he became subject to the law for man, he voluntarily bound himself to fulfil the duties of a Brother, in loving his brother as himself, and in performing all that he was able to perform, for his benefit and advantage; and to do for him, all the good he was able to effect. His ability was beyond all others: he was able to deliver, to redeem, to bring out of the state of satan's bondage, and to bless with all spiritual blessings the redeemed of his power. His brotherly love was in all respects equal to his power, equal to effect his voluntary undertaking, and the obligations which then lay upon him, and therefore he hastened to accomplish the work of redemption.

The כִּסְיָא, the kinsman redeemer, under the Jewish law, was a designed figure and representation of His character and office, who should redeem his people to himself, redeem their inheritance for them, and *avenge their blood*. None else could thus redeem his brother: but, behold a Brother indeed; Jesus, the Son of man, the Son of God, graciously undertaking, and almighty to fulfil, the character and the work. Those who necessarily bear the natural character, are often destitute of its spirit; but “there is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.” (Prov. xviii. 24.) And who is this but our Jesus: he fulfilled every duty and every obligation of the character, and still bears it before the Throne, to carry on his designs of love. If a brother be born for adversity (Prov. xvii. 17), it was this which excited the first exercise of his love to his

people: this draws forth his brotherly kindness, which flows and overflows from his affectionate heart; which has flowed from heaven to earth, and will flow through all the desert, till it loses itself again in the ocean of everlasting love.

This led him to bear the character; and still every adversity of his people engages his compassion, and secures his unremitting attention, and will do so till all his brethren are raised above these scenes of adversity, to the peace and glory of his kingdom.

But there is still a more interesting consideration connected with the fulfilment of the character; for as he hath become our Brother in the flesh, so that he may bear a nearer relation, he provides and secures the means whereby they may become his brethren in the Spirit. By becoming the Son of man, he has,

2. *Obtained the right to bestow his Quickening Spirit upon them*, that they may be born as children of God; and thus by his grace he brings all his people into a spiritual relation to himself. Thus they become his brethren by a much higher relation in the spiritual world, by being one spirit with their Lord, as he has become of one human nature with them. “Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth.” (James i. 18.) Thus, born of his power, by his word, and by his Spirit, they enter upon a relation worthy of him by whom they are begotten: brought from the kingdom of Satan, they enter into the family of the Lord—the family and household of faith. “Abba, Father!” is now applicable, in a peculiar sense, to Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father in him; our Father by a new and spiritual birth: and thus, in a much higher relation, Jesus, the Son of God, is *the Brother of his regenerate people*. Now when his Spirit exerts his almighty influence by a new and spiritual birth, they become partakers of a new and spiritual nature, suited to the dignity of that relation into which they enter; raised above the world with higher principles, with higher views, and more exalted aims; they

live the life they now live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God. Hence by a real vital union with him, they become conformed to him : love delights in him, faith rests upon him, and hope looks forward to the privileges and glory which belong to the high relation which they bear to him. If partakers of his grace, and thus related to him, this experience is ours ; for it is what his grace brings all his people to experience : and, “ except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” If our hearts are in the world, in the flesh, or under the power of sin, we are not in the family of Christ ; nor have we any right to its provisions, its privileges, or its inheritance. The Apostle states it thus ; “ We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26.) Thus by grace we practically enter upon the privilege which adoption has confirmed ; and his Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the sons of God (Rom. viii. 16) ; for, “ because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father !” (Gal. iv. 6.) How happy the believer in Jesus, how high the dignity to which he has attained ! Quickened by his Spirit, by the power of a new and spiritual life he is raised above the low mean concerns of earth ; and in union with Jesus, possesses the most glorious privileges, and the nearest relation to his exalted Lord ; a child of the same family, of which he is the eldest Brother. He is not ashamed *to call us brethren*. This brings them also, as the relation implies, to be co-heirs with him. God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he has prepared for them a city ; and they may therefore look forward by faith, with the saints of old, persuaded of and embracing the promises, while as strangers and pilgrims on earth, they are going forward to the possession of them. It is beneath their true character to glory in any thing here below : for all things here are theirs ; yea, things present and things to come ; for they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. But how does their being in Christ secure their title to, and

their possession of, these blessings? The Apostle argues the right and the security of possession, from this relation into which they are brought by the Spirit of grace: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Therefore nothing shall separate us from this relation, nor from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. viii. 14, to the end.) Their possession, indeed, is still farther secured by his own possession for them; for having regained, as our Kinsman Redeemer, by right of purchase, the forfeited inheritance, as the elder Brother he entered into the possession, and holds it in reserve for his people. As our Forerunner, He for us entered, even Jesus, made our High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. And thus he encouraged his disciples to lift their hearts above all the troubles of the present state, assuring them he was going to prepare a place for them amidst the mansions of his Father's house, and would come again, to bring them to himself in that place of endless felicity. Hence the believer is said to be already blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Ephes. i. 3); because he is in possession of them, only as the Forerunner and Surety of his people. "Now," says the Apostle, "we are the sons of God; but it does not yet appear what we shall be: but when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." How suitable this character to the consolation of his people! It lays a ground for faith, and confidence, and hope in him, in the most endearing manner. He who has condescended to bear so near relation to the lowest nature of his people, in its lowest state, shall he not have love to accomplish all his designs of salvation, even to the end? He who condescended to be like us in all things, to bear our sins and our sorrows, shall he not still pity and relieve? Shall not such a Friend, such a Brother, sympathize with all his afflicted brethren, since he bears the same nature still upon the throne? This is the argument which the Apostle

frequently uses: "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted." And again; "We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the Throne of Grace." (Heb. ii. 17, 18; iv. 15, 16.)

Yes; he still pities and compassionates the weakness, the fears, the afflictions, the temptations of his people; and, notwithstanding all, he yet delights in them, and in his faithfulness will bring them safely through and beyond them all. If he was not ashamed actually to become their Brother in their nature, he will not be ashamed to acknowledge the relation. Yes, he will acknowledge it when, coming in the clouds of heaven, he fills the throne of judgment: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Ye have done it to this my brother; ye have done it therefore unto me.

Believer, walk worthy of your exalted privilege and character; be ambitious to walk as he walked, that you may prove your relation to him. "Be followers of God," says the Apostle, "as dear children," &c. If begotten to such a relation, how little must the world appear and all its glory in the comparison! How trifling either its sorrows or its joys! The sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Be patient, O believer! be joyful in them all, and "gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end; for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Let not the glory of earth dazzle your eyes, or again attract your heart. What are the glories of the most dignified situation, or the most exalted inheritance upon earth, to that which awaits the believer hereafter—the inheritance of

eternal life and glory. If faith did but realize the scene which is advancing, how would it enlarge the heart, and spiritualize the affections, and raise them from the things of earth to the things which are above! Blessed Redeemer, who hath, by such condescension, opened for us such glorious prospects! His condescension secures our exaltation. He, in all things, indeed, must have the pre-eminence. He is the elder Brother in the family of God, possessing the highest dignity: but since he hath become like us, he will make us like him; and since he hath condescended to our sufferings, we shall rise to participate his glories. If not ashamed, even in the present state of sin and wretchedness, to become the Brother of his people, and to acknowledge the dear and intimate relation, when he has washed them with his blood, begotten them by his Spirit, and formed them for himself, he will not be ashamed to acknowledge them before the throne, and to introduce them into the full and joint possession, with himself, of the inheritance of the saints in light.

ESSAY IX.

Head over All.

IT appears to have been the design of God, in all his works from the beginning, to glorify his perfections ; or, in other words, to glorify himself. For this purpose, he determined to make man ; for this purpose, in his unsearchable wisdom, he permitted him, in the uncontrolled exercise of his own free will, to fall ; and, for the same purpose, he devised in eternity the glorious plan of Redemption. But in the devising of this economy, it was designed that the person of the Redeemer should be exalted and magnified above all ; and in the execution of the work, he was to be the “Alpha and Omega ;”—*i. e.* from first to last the whole management was to be committed into his hands ; the fulness of its blessings were to be treasured up in him, and he was to have all the glory of obtaining and bestowing them upon his redeemed people. For this purpose he is constituted the Head of his church, &c. ; and “it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col. i. 18, 19) ; and being raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; he, the Lord Jehovah, hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to his church. (Eph. i. 20—22.)

The character is indeed most comprehensive in its import, and most encouraging to faith, in every situation of the believer. It bears an analogy to, and implies in itself, his regal authority ; but it implies still more, as it

represents the right upon which he exercises that authority, and the nature and the design of it, as reserved for the purposes of accomplishing his mediatorial undertaking. It is far more extensive than the character of the Head of his church, in which he is held forth to believers as the Fountain of all their supplies; as it represents him invested with supreme authority over all things, for their benefit and salvation. I know not any character which the blessed Redeemer sustains which is more glorious and more interesting. That he who was once the Babe of Bethlehem, the Man of sorrows, the crucified, the despised Nazarene; that the gracious, condescending, and benevolent Redeemer should possess all power in heaven and in earth, to conduct all the concerns of his church, not only as one in the Eternal Jehovah, and possessing all the incommunicable and incomprehensible attributes of Godhead, but in that nature which unites him to me as Immanuel, God and man; — this endears his person and his character, and is encouragement to the most humble and most afflicted of his people. The consideration of the office itself, and the design of his bearing it, will therefore lead us to the exercise of a more lively faith, excite our adoration and love, and command our submission and obedience. That the Lord Jesus Christ, as God, is the Creator of all things, we are expressly told; and, as such, he must possess an absolute authority in all. He is, therefore, by nature *the Lord of all*; but as *the “Head over all things to his church,”* he hath received this power in a new character as the Mediator, having obtained, by fulfilling the terms of the covenant, a covenant-right to manage all, for the ends and purposes of the covenant of redemption. This title, therefore, implies the union of his absolute and almighty power, with his mediatorial right to exercise it, for the accomplishing of the work of the Father in the salvation of his people;—and the consideration of it, in a few of its most leading branches, will greatly exalt our conceptions of the glories of the Redeemer, and of his suitableness to the faith and confidence of his church.

Let us contemplate him, as he is,

1. *The Head over all things in nature.*—When we look upon the heavens above, and behold their beauty, their order, and their harmony, we should recollect that it is our Lord who upholds and sustains them, who directs and orders all their motions, and bids them still continue their complex, but regular, revolutions, in their various but concurrent orbits. If we look upon the earth beneath, it is he who covers its fields with verdure, who bids it produce its various fruits in their seasons, and who guides and controls its elements as he pleases: “For by him were all things created which are in heaven and in earth,” &c. And again; “All things were created by him and for him, and by him all things consist.” (Col. i. 16, 17.) He shall conduct the complicated movements of each, till at last he lift up his hand to heaven, and swear, that time shall be no longer; and then at his pleasure the whole system shall be dissolved. When that day of the Lord shall come, “the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up.” (2 Pet. iii. 10.)

O blessed Jesus! how vast is thy power, how infinite thy dominion! What canst thou not do for me, and for all the church of thy redeemed people, when all nature obeys thy word, who art constituted the Head over it for the benefit of thy church?

When we contemplate the works of providence, in the government of all the concerns of earth, in this he still appears the same. His all-seeing eye runs through universal nature: the affairs of mighty empires are trifles in his all-comprehensive mind; while the meanest individual, and the most minute concerns, are not beneath his notice. He cannot be distracted or perplexed by the multiplicity of concerns; and, therefore, he as readily attends to universal nature, as though it were but one individual operation; and as much attends to every individual person and every individual concern, as if that one person existed in nature alone, or even that one concern was the only

object of attention. When the beloved disciple, in his prophetic vision, wept much that no one was found worthy to open the book and unloose the seals of the Divine dispensation, he is directed to the Lion of the tribe of Judah; the Lamb as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne. Both these characters point us directly to our Jesus, as the person who should accomplish the whole. He therefore promises to be with his church always, even unto the end of the world; that is, with all and every one of his people always, at the same moment of time in every part of the earth, and, to the end of time, in all generations of men. He who is capable of this must be ever present, must possess omnipresence, infinity, and eternity: but it is Jesus who speaks, and who must therefore possess this power and glory. In the world at large, in the church in particular, in the family and the personal concerns of all and each of his people, He is the Governor and the Director by his providential observations of them, his constant care over them, his infinite wisdom and goodness, and his almighty power. He rules alike the stormy element, and the heart, the dispositions, and the purposes of men. Who can contemplate these views without increasing adoration, confidence and love? But, if we carry our views still higher, he is the Head over all,

2. *In grace, in the wonderful system of Redemption.*— Having completed the work of redemption, according to the covenant promise, all the blessings of redemption are laid up in him, as the boundless Treasury. Hence it is said, it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, in consequence of this decree of the Eternal Jehovah, in the eternal counsel of redemption, he is full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.) In him dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge (Col. ii. 3), and all the fulness of the Godhead. (ver. 9.) And since all the blessings of grace and of redemption are in him, we can have nothing but from him. He, of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: He is the Lord Jehovah, our righteousness and strength;

the Alpha and Omega, the "All and in all." Not only is he the Fountain and the Source of all grace, as it is treasured up in him; but it is he who bestows it by his Spirit, according to his own sovereign pleasure, "dividing to every man severally as he will." The grace to call, to sanctify, to preserve, to comfort, and to bless his people, is in him, and derived only from him. He gives when, and how, and in the measure he sees best. And it is predicted that all his people shall say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: to him shall men come, and in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Though he hath constituted certain means as the usual channels of his grace, and does in general communicate it through these means according to his promise, yet the means themselves are but empty channels, and are found to be, in the experience of believers, just what his presence and his blessings make them. Destitute of these, they are vain and unprofitable; but with these, full of consolation, of strengthening energy, and sanctifying efficacy to his people. Thus they learn their entire dependence upon him; and the knowledge of their own emptiness and his all-sufficiency is the lesson which believers are learning in the school of Christ: and when they have learnt this lesson upon earth, they will have a more exalted lesson to learn above; viz. that the same Jesus is the same,

3. Head over all things *in the kingdom of glory*.— Upon the throne above, he is the source of all felicity to the surrounding spirits of the just. As he hath almighty power in heaven and in earth to bring them there, so he hath almighty power to communicate of his fulness, that his people may be like him when they are with him, and participate, as they behold, that glory which the Father hath given him in the nature of his brethren. But these views are too elevated for our feeble conceptions: we will therefore again drop down to earth, and adore his glory here below by faith. What character, what

office of the blessed Jesus can be more adorable than this, or more suited to the present state of his people! Surely he hath all that I can want, all that I can desire, all that a Saviour ought to have, to encourage the return, and the reliance of a penitent sinner, and the hope and expectation of his believing people. He hath all that can render him “able to save unto the uttermost, all that come to God by him.” But the design for which he is thus exalted in our nature, and vested with mediatorial authority, is peculiarly suited to confirm this confidence of faith.

If constituted the Head over all things, it is to or for his church, which can mean no less than that the very design of his exaltation is, that he may complete the promises of his everlasting and covenant love towards them; that he might be able to realize all his counsels and his promises, and all the expectations and faith of his people. A Saviour so exalted, so invested with power and authority over all, must be able to accomplish these; and a Saviour who hath so condescended that he might be exalted for this purpose, can never want the grace and the disposition to effect them. As the purposes of salvation for his people led him from his throne, so for this purpose he re-ascended that throne in the nature of man: as this led him to the cross, and every scene of humiliation, it can never be forgotten or neglected on his throne in all his glory. The manner, therefore, in which he exercises this office, in conformity to the design of his receiving it, will form a subject of delightful meditation; as it is the glory and the perfection of his mediatorial character, and the security of his chosen. Here let the believer stand, and at every step survey his glory, and behold his own felicity and safety, in the authority with which his Saviour is invested upon the throne to fulfil the designs of his exaltation, in giving eternal life to his people. He must exert his power,

1. *In calling each of them by his effectual grace, according to his covenant purpose, out of darkness into light, and from the kingdom of satan into his own kingdom of grace. And this he does.*

While his children are in a state of nature, they are, in their character, their disposition, and their just deserts, like others; they are following the course of this world, "dead in trespasses and sins, and the children of justly deserved wrath." (Eph. ii. 1—3.) They stand in need, therefore, of Almighty Power to regenerate, to new-create, to quicken them, that they may live to God. Nothing short of such an Almighty Power can ever effect this wonder of grace, or produce this necessary change of nature and of state.

This the Redeemer of his people stands engaged to effect; and, having performed the work of redemption according to the covenant terms, in his exaltation he is vested with power to fulfil it. Now the Eternal Spirit, in the order of that covenant, is the gift of the exalted Redeemer; who, as the Quickening Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, grace, and power, can raise the dead sinner "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness," and make him "free from the law of sin and death." Upon this the promise is grounded, that his people shall be willing in the day of his power; and the gift of repentance and forgiveness of sin, is communicated from the Prince and Saviour upon the throne (Acts v. 31); being wrought in the heart by that Eternal Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, to fulfil his own covenant office, in the salvation of the redeemed. In the fulfilment of this purpose, with infinite wisdom he disposes the concerns of his people, both before and after they are brought to the knowledge of his grace. They are often surprised, when they look back upon the dispensations of his providence, at the guiding hand which led the blind in a way that they knew not, and in paths which they had not known; which made darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: they trace some peculiar interposition of his care and direction, which brought them under the sound of the Gospel; and behold with adoration the connexion of events, which, independently of their own designs or concurrence, united to soften down their former prejudices in

their ignorance; and dispose them to attend to the concerns of their souls, and the message of the Gospel. Some salutary affliction, perhaps, bowed down their stubborn spirit; some gracious influence insensibly drew the heart, and inclined it to submit: either the terrors of his law broke down and subdued the rebellious will; or the views of gospel grace allured the affections into holy delight in Christ, and the blessings of his salvation. His wisdom was as evident in the means, as his power was in the work: the designs of his love may be traced from the first step which directed them heavenward; then his purposes began to rise into effect, which are now more evident in their actual conversion to God, and enjoyment of the blessings of salvation. His hand was evident, either in bringing the Gospel to them, or in bringing them under the sound of his Gospel; and, though he does not personally appear, as when he must needs go through Samaria, nor command an Apostle to remain, contrary to his own intention, where he has much people to collect, as in the city of Corinth (Acts xviii. 9, 10); yet his providential direction, though secret, is equally certain, in conducting the designs, and fulfilling the purposes of his grace. In allusion to the calling of the Gentile church, he himself states the obligation of effecting it; "That also I must bring:" but such an obligation could arise from nothing else than his own voluntary undertaking, or covenant engagement, or the acceptance of his mediatorial office on the throne; with all power for this very purpose. The infinite grace of such an undertaking must endear him to his people; while it secures the glorious accomplishment of his redemption, in the collecting of all his redeemed. We adore thee, therefore, thou blessed Jesus, as thus exalted, the Head over all things to thy church.

We behold him also in the same character, and in the fulfilment of the same office,

2. *Engaged for, and conducting all things for, their safety and preservation.*—The constant care and protection of the Redeemer is the only hope of the believer.

If not assured of this, he must tremble every step he treads; nor could the strongest believer, in his highest and best frame, have any ground of triumph, as he could have no ground of absolute security. What confident hope could he entertain, that he should assuredly keep on in the way of the Lord, in the midst of so many dangers, enemies, and temptations; with a heart so prone to wander and forsake the Lord, and so naturally disposed to earth as its centre, and its happiness? But the word of the Gospel directs him to look to Jesus: it assures him of his constant, unremitting, and never-failing care: "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee," is the promise of that word; and therefore we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me." (Heb. xiii. 6.) But his promise secures still more; not only that he will not depart from his people, but, "I will put," says he, "my fear into your heart, that ye shall not depart from me." Here then, is the double security of his unchangeableness to ensure our stability: he will not leave us, nor will he suffer us to leave him; and "faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. v. 24): who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; for God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. i. 9.)

In order to this, as the Head over all things to his church, he is engaged in directing every circumstance of his providence, for the fulfilment of his promises. He guides and directs, controls, and prevents, and manages all things, after the counsel of his own will. "All things are delivered unto him of his Father" (Matt. xi. 27): and to him, *as the Son of man*, is given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. vii. 14.) How pleasing, how encouraging is the scriptural view of the mediatorial kingdom of our Lord! Look up, O believer! Jesus watcheth thy steps, to guard

and guide thee: He watcheth all thy concerns, to direct and order them: He watcheth all thine enemies, to control their power and malice, and to defend thee from them: He watcheth over all things in nature, providence, and grace, to preserve thee for himself. He whom all things must obey; He to whose pleasure all things must subserve; He is exalted to manage all for thee: what then can hurt or destroy thee? What shall separate thee from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. viii. 35, to the end.) The whole economy and order of the church, is essentially designed for this purpose: “He who descended, is the same also which ascended up, far above all heavens, that he might fill all things: and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 10—13.) We may, therefore, join the confidence of the Apostle, and say, notwithstanding the opposition of enemies and temptations, and the still more dangerous enemy within, the remaining corruption of the heart, “We are confident of this thing, that he who hath begun a good work in us, will complete it to the day of Jesus Christ.” He is exalted to manage all things, not merely for their preservation, but,

3. *That all things may actually bless his people.*—“How shall I curse,” said Balaam of old, “whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not

defied? He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it! For God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (See Numb. xxiii. 8, &c.) If he hath said, All nations shall be blessed in him, all nature cannot reverse the decree, nor prevent the fulfilment. To know Christ is to be blessed; to have Christ, is to have all things on our side; "for all things are yours," says the Apostle, "whether life or death, things present or things to come, all are yours," *i. e.* on your side, to promote your felicity in time and eternity; "for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21—23.)

The objects of the Redeemer's love and care must therefore be secure; for what can hurt them when all things are under him? When he led, as the Angel of the Covenant, the chosen tribes through the desert wilderness, how often did he manifest to them his love and his power? At his command the waters stand on an heap, or rocks become rivers, and flow throughout the desert; the clouds drop them down food, and spread the earth with the bread of heaven, or cover it with flocks of quails, to give them the anxiously desired flesh to eat. Thus the Redeemer of Israel discovers himself as the Lord of nature, governing, directing, changing, controlling, its order as he pleases. At other times, the ravens shall carry provision to a banished prophet, and afford him the supply he needs.

When Eliphaz is describing, in the Book of Job, the happiness of those who are under the care of the Lord, "Thou shalt be in league," says he, "with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." (Job. v. 23.) In the Prophet Hosea the Lord confirms the truth of this, by his faithful promise to his returning people: "In that day," says he, "I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." (Hosea ii. 18, &c.) In the fulfilment of his de-

signs of mercy, he promises, if necessary, to perform again his miracle of old, and make the wilderness a stream of water and a garden of delights. (Isa. xli. 17, 18.) He engages to defend them from every weapon of the enemy, and every tongue of the reviler; and to continue his everlasting kindness when heaven and earth shall pass away, and confirm to his people for ever all the covenant of his peace. (Isa. liv. 10—17.)

To apply this promise to the church of Christ, is only following the example of the Apostle, who thus appropriates the promise of God to Joshua, of his unremitting care, and encourages the believer to rejoice in the confidence of its fulfilment to himself, and to rest in assurance of the unfailing help of his Redeemer. Happy, then, is the people who are in such a case; yea, blessed is the people who have the Lord for their God. (Compare Josh. i. 5. and Heb. xiii. 5.)

But, then, it may be asked, If he who is the Lord of nature, and Head over all things, is governing all things for the benefit of his believing people; how is it that in general they have so little of those things which are reckoned as the good things of the world? And to this it can only be replied, Because he sees that these are not good for them. If it be asked, why they are subjected to so many trials and afflictions, that it may eminently be said, Many are the afflictions of the righteous; it must again be answered, Because he sees that they are needful for them, to purify, to sanctify, and to refine them for himself. The great blessings which he receives for his people are beyond in an invisible and eternal state; and the trials of the present time are, like the refiner's furnace, to purge away their dross, and fit them to shine the brighter in the realms of glory. The trials of the present state may therefore well be considered as his covenant blessings, which, however grievous now, will work the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and excite the praises of eternity. He has not, therefore, promised to keep them out of trouble; but to keep them in their troubles, and to support them through;

to suffer none to fall upon them but those which he will cause to forward their spiritual good and eternal welfare. All things, therefore, are under him, that “all things may work together for good to them that love God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.”

But not only are the outward afflictions of his people guided by his providence, but their spiritual enemies are equally under his control, and their spiritual afflictions under his direction. He may suffer the great adversary to tempt, to try, and to distress his church, but he will not suffer him to destroy; and he who, with the Apostle, is compelled to mourn over the body of sin and death, and who groans for deliverance, shall with him have to triumph, with “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom.vii.14—25.)

If the nations of the earth be in commotion, their various relations and movements are known to him. He watches and restrains, directs or controls: He makes one nation a scourge, a besom, or rod, to others; but in all these corrections and purifications, the welfare of his church is the great object; and when the tyrants of the earth have performed his purposes, their power is no more. Such was the fate of the Saracenic and the Turkish power, his instruments for a time of correcting a corrupted church; but when his purposes were answered, at the very time his prophetic declaration had fixed, their conquest terminates, and their power sinks gradually into decay. (Rev. ix.) Thus will the great Head over all things to his church defend and protect his church, till he bring all its members through,

4. *To the kingdom of his glory.*—This is the ultimate design for which he was invested with the mediatorial government: having received power over all, for to give eternal life to as many as were given him. (John xvii. 2.) Hence he promises to give unto them eternal life, and that none shall pluck them out of his hands. (John x. 28.) He expresses his determination that they should be with him where he is, to behold his glory, &c.; and promises.

that where he is, there they shall also be; and when they have overcome, shall sit with him on his throne, as he hath overcome, and is set down with the Father on his throne. To accomplish this purpose, he hath taken possession of that glory, and will come again to receive them to himself. What then can prevent the fulfilment of his designs? He hath a glory to give, all glory to bestow; all power to overcome every enemy, to prepare every heart, and to keep every believer to the enjoyment.

We have here an additional proof of the Divine glory of our Jesus; for though he exercises this office in his human nature, yet he can be no less than God to whom such authority and such an office are committed. He can be no less than the Lord of all nature, of providence, grace, and glory; the Lord of all, God over all; who can thus direct, restrain, and govern all things for the benefit and eternal salvation of his people.

But, if all things are directed by him, what can they expect who are uninterested in his favour, who slight his grace, refuse his authority, or despise his salvation? He who can turn every thing into a blessing to his people, will make his enemies to bow before him. Nothing can bless where he displays his wrath; amidst all the honours and the possessions of earth, the wealthy sinner must be accursed; and, dying at enmity with Christ, must die under his curse. When, therefore, the great Lord of all shall come again in his glory, he shall come with power, to take vengeance on his enemies, as well as to bestow glory upon his people. (2 Thess. i. 7, &c.) Let not the sinner, then, either trifle or delay; but with a sense of sin, and grief for his rebellion, be found waiting at the throne of his grace; and he will place the humble penitent among his people, and give him the blessings of his kingdom; but without this, it will be impossible to escape his indignation and his own destruction. But let the humble believer learn where to commit all his concerns; where to refer all his wants, in faith and confidence. Whatever may be taking place in the world at large; whatever are the dis-

pensations of Providence; should all nature be dissolved, nothing can take place without my Jesus: He, the Friend of his people, is upon the throne with infinite wisdom, almighty power, sovereign grace, and covenant and everlasting love. Believer, realize the pleasing thought in the strongest exercise of faith; adore him in his love and care unchangeable towards his church. He is all things to them, and is exalted to do all things for them. He left his throne and took their nature, that he might accomplish their redemption; and again he resumed that throne in their nature, that he might perfect their salvation. From thence he orders the course of nature and of providence, and governs over all, that he may bring his people safely to glory. What an exalted view does this give us of the dear Redeemer! Never can we exalt him too highly, believe in him too confidently, nor love him too much. Let me then, my soul, live daily by the faith of the Son of God: in him I am secure, and in the faith of him I may be happy. He will make all things subservient to his glory; all things subservient to my preservation and eternal salvation: let me trust him in all, till he bring me through all; and, when brought safely through, by his almighty power and unchanging love, I behold him on the throne of his glory, to him shall be all the praise, the glory, and the honour, throughout eternity.

ESSAY X.

Solomon.

TYPIFIED by the glories of Solomon in the Old Testament, but far exceeding him in every thing for which he was renowned, behold, said the Redeemer of himself, “*A greater than Solomon is here.*” A more distinguished person was never beheld on earth than the one; but heaven and earth can never equal the glories of the other. Though once the lowest of the sons of men, by voluntary humiliation, he is in himself, and by right of covenant promise, the highest on the throne above. In many particulars, there is a designed and a striking similarity; and if we run through the leading features of the name, it will afford instruction, encouragement, consolation, and confirmation, to the faith and love of his people. Solomon will appear more glorious as a type, a distinguished type, of Christ: his beauty and splendour will appear more eminent, by their correspondence with, and relation to, those of the King of kings: though, while as the result of every comparison, we shall be compelled to exclaim, “Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” The typical circumstances are various, and might be branched out into a variety of particulars: we shall, however, only select the most striking, and those which may tend to hold up the Redeemer in his brightest glories, to the admiring eye of faith.

The first thing which strikes us in Solomon is the dignity which is put upon him at his birth, when the Lord condescended to express his peculiar love to him; and therefore he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord; *i. e.* the beloved of the Lord. (2 Sam. xii. 24, 25.)

The name of Solomon appears also to have been given him by the particular direction of the Lord himself, as expressive of his delight in him, as well as of the peace of his kingdom. The word signifies "the peaceable," or "the perfect;" or it might signify, "he who recompenses:" but the reason given for imposing it, seems to determine its reference to the former: "He shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days." (1 Chron. xxii. 9.) He was therefore the object of his father's dearest love, his only beloved son. And do we not here behold the type of him; of whom, when he was born into the world, it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him;" of whom the Eternal Father proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son;" and who, when entering into the world of glory, was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead? The Father was well pleased with the person, and with all the work, of our glorious Redeemer, his only beloved Son. He delights to put honour upon him, and upon his people through him; and therefore he declares, "The glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 22, 23.) He thus unites his own glory and honour with theirs, and theirs with his, as both beloved of the Father. And yet, thou blessed Jesus, we adore and praise thee, acknowledging that all our glory is from union with thyself, and all our felicity through thee, as the beloved of the Father; in whom we are viewed, that we may be beloved in thee, and as our Friend and Advocate before Him, in and through whom we are accepted and approved!

In consequence of his Father's peculiar love, notwithstanding every opposition, and every attempt at usurpa-

tion, Solomon is exalted above all, and enthroned, by his Father's appointment, over the kingdom of Israel.

After the revolt of Absalom, and the usurpation of Adonijah, at the direction of his father, "Zadok the Priest, and Nathan the Prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the Priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon, and they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save King Solomon. And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them." (1 Kings i. 38—40.)—A repetition of this is recorded, in a still more solemn manner, in 1 Chron. xxix. 20—25. "Then Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord, as king, instead of David his father, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him; and all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of King David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the King. And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." What a lively emblem of the glory and exaltation of the King Messiah, who sits upon the throne of David, to order it, and to establish it with justice, judgment, and with righteousness! Him hath God exalted with his right hand, as the Prince and the Saviour. He hath "highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. ii. 9, 10.) He has set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet." (Eph. i. 20—23.) Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers

take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed; yet, says Jehovah, I have set my King, I have anointed him, upon my holy hill of Sion. He is represented, therefore, by the Prophet, as thus exulting over his enemies: "He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." (Isa. l. 7—9.) When, in the days of his flesh, he entered Jerusalem, riding upon an ass and a colt, the foal of an ass, the surrounding multitude shouted to his honour, "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was the only dignity he ever assumed on earth; but this was but a type and figure of the glory he received, when, ascending on high, he led captivity captive, and claimed admission to the throne of his Father. Then the hosts of heaven, and all the multitude of his redeemed before the throne, shouted, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Thus let our Solomon be welcomed to his spiritual dominion in our hearts: there let the everlasting doors be lifted up to admit him, and let him be crowned the unrivaled Governor, and possess the supreme, the sole, authority. Let every power and principality submit to him, and proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 12, &c.) But there are certain particularities in Solomon's kingdom, in which he bears a greater resemblance to our exalted Redeemer.

The most remarkable of these was,

1. *That he was, at the same time, both the King and the King's Son.*—In this he is the most eminent type of the blessed Jesus, who is King of saints, and Lord of lords; yet the Son of God, the Son of the Father, the Eternal Father of his people, but mediatorially the Beloved Son of the Father. It is in this view, as the King, and

the King's Son, that the holy Psalmist speaks of him, in that beautiful prophetic Psalm, which describes the glory, the majesty, and the mercy of his dominion: "Give the King thy judgments, O God; and thy righteousness to the King's Son. Then he shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." (Psal. lxxii. 1, 2.) It is evident the person is the same who bore both these characters, and whose government is there described with so much interest.

His name also indicates,

2. That he was *the Prince of Peace, and denoted the peaceableness and prosperity of his kingdom.* "His name shall be called Solomon; and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days." (1 Chron. xxii. 6—9.)—We are expressly told that this was fulfilled through his extensive dominions, and that he had peace on all sides round about him. (1 Kings iv. 24, 25.) Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. This, also, is the name of our exalted Redeemer. He is the Prince of Peace, the true Melchisedec, the King of Salem, *i. e.* the King of Peace: of the increase of his peace and government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) As this was the gracious design of God toward Israel, in placing Solomon on the throne of Israel; so was it his design of mercy toward his spiritual Israel, in appointing this greater than Solomon to the throne of universal government. In the counsel of eternity, when he was set up, and his goings forth were from everlasting; it was then said of him, "This Man shall be the Peace" (Mic. v. 5); for then the counsel of peace was between them both, the Father and the Son. (Zech. vi. 13.) The glorious and infinitely wise plan was laid, to restore peace to sinners, by reconciling God and man, that all the infinitely holy attributes of the Divine nature might be reconciled to offending rebellious creatures, and the intercourse

between a holy God and his sinful creatures be renewed, consistently with the highest glory of all his perfections. In this wonderful plan, “the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed.” (Isa. liii. 5.) He obtained peace by the blood of his cross, and thus reconciled heaven and earth again. The Psalmist has celebrated the otherwise impossible union of righteousness and peace, in the person of our Immanuel: Mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, says he, have in him embraced each other. (Psal. lxxxv. 10.) And thus he came to speak peace to his people, and to his saints. When about to depart from his disciples, and to leave them in this world of trouble; though he promised them no exemption from trouble themselves, yet, says he, “in me ye shall have peace. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John xiv. 27.) And when, therefore, he had finished the work of redemption, whenever he met his disciples, between the time of his resurrection and ascension, he addressed them in this endearing and consoling language, “Peace be unto you.” Yes, blessed Redeemer, “thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us,” and wilt complete the work of that grace in glory. When the prophet Zechariah is predicting his entrance into Jerusalem, as the King of Israel, he describes the wonderful effects of his government: and, amongst these, he numbers his speaking peace to the heathen; *i. e.* no doubt, his uniting the Gentile nations with his church, and in all the peaceable effects of his spiritual and universal kingdom. In this respect, Solomon, however admirable, was but a type of Jesus our exalted King—exalted to dispense all the blessings of his tranquil government to his people. He speaks peace to the returning sinner, to the contrite spirit, to the troubled heart, to the afflicted body, and to the tempted soul. The benefits of his mediatorial kingdom are most strikingly represented by the Psalmist, in that Psalm, or Prayer, for

Solomon, in which he can only be considered as a type of our Immanuel, under whose reign the mountains shall bring peace, and the little hills righteousness to the people; whose gracious influence comes down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth; in whose days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth; in whom all nations shall be blessed, while all nations shall call him blessed. (Psal. lxxii. *passim*: compare Isa. xxvi. 1—4; xxvii. 1—5.) These are the grateful fruits of the dominion of Messiah; of his government over the earth, and over the hearts of his people. The heart which is most unreservedly submissive to him will find the most of this heavenly tranquillity: nor is the peace of his people ever broken but when they break from his dominion, practically dispute his authority, or fear to trust themselves in his hands. Their peace is never interrupted by any impropriety in his disposal, any mistake in his arrangements, or any neglect of their interests; but by that ignorance which counteracts his designs, that pride which resists his disposal, and those unsanctified passions which oppose his authority and his laws. By these too often is the peace of his church and spiritual kingdom, and of the heart of his people, interrupted and broken; but still he guides, and guards, and blesses them, till he has brought them around his throne. There peace shall diffuse itself through all his heavenly empire, without alloy, without interruption, and without end; and there he shall rule, indeed, as the Prince of Peace.

The kingdom of Solomon was also most celebrated,

3. *For its wisdom and its justice.*—In answer to the prayer which Solomon offered up at the commencement of his reign; a prayer suited to such a state of eminent dignity and peculiar delicacy, in ruling over such a mighty people and such an extended empire; we are told that God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the East country, and all the wisdom of Egypt;

for he was wiser than all men. (1 Kings iv. 29—33: compare 2 Chron. i. 7—12.) We have an instance of this wisdom recorded in 1 Kings iii. 16, &c., well calculated to impress our minds with the depth of his understanding, the clearness of his discernment, and the promptitude and readiness of his decision, in the execution of justice to the people. We are also told in 1 Kings iv. 34, that “there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.” From amongst these one instance is recorded, as most worthy of remembrance, and, perhaps, as peculiarly typifying the collecting of the Gentile nations to the exalted Redeemer, to behold his glory, and be instructed in the knowledge of all things pertaining to his salvation; for “when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the NAME of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions, and Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the King, which he told her not. And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built, there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the King, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and thy prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.” (1 Kings x. 1—7.) What an admirable king! what a happy people! Well might she add, “Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.” (ver. 8.) This, however, was but a shadow of the infinite wisdom and knowledge of our exalted Jesus: it was but a ray from his eternal fountain of light, a feeble beam from that sun of Divine wisdom. He who judges in his church, hath all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in himself: the stores of nature, grace, and glory, are his: in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead. Angels desire to look into the mystery of redeeming love; but He alone prevails to open the book and unloose all the seals of Divine providence, to conduct all the

affairs of his church and of the world ; and soon he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. He shall be admired for that wisdom by which he has led them ; by which he has guided them through every path of providence, and preserved them amidst all their dangers safe unto his eternal kingdom ; by which he has brought them through all their miseries and trials, and exalted them over all their enemies ; as well as for that glory to which he has brought them, by the might of his arm, and the unchangeableness of his grace and love. There were, no doubt, many disorders in the government of Solomon, which no human wisdom could prevent ; since human wisdom cannot divide itself, to such a vast variety of objects, as to attend to every individual person, much less to every individual concern, in a mighty and extensive empire. But our Jesus hath the treasures of infinite wisdom : he sees and knows with perfect discernment, and the most minute accuracy, each of his subjects, and each of every one of their concerns ; not an enemy, not a temptation, not a trial, not a difficulty, but is open to his observation ; nor can there be any, nor are they all of them together, beyond the management of his infinite mind. Not one thing can possibly be wrong, in the government of the King of saints. What a blessed, what an all-sufficient King, and Governor of his people ! Well may they rest, being under his protection, and trust him with all their concerns. There shall be grace and peace under his administration : the God of peace shall give peace by all means : they shall have reason to bless him for all his dispensations, and to admire his wisdom in the end. Of him it may be more truly said, “Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee upon the throne of Israel. Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee King, to do judgment and justice.”

4. The kingdom of Solomon was famed *for its riches and its glory*.—And in this also, it was a further type and emblem of the kingdom of Jesus. “I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour,” says the Lord, “such as none of

the kings have had, that have been before thee; neither shall there any after thee have the like. So Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones; and cedar trees made he as sycamore-trees, that are in the vale for abundance." (2 Chron. i. 12—15.) He gathered silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces. (Eccl. ii. 8.) "And the navy of Hiram brought gold from Ophir, and great plenty of almug-trees, and precious stones. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year, was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides that he had of the merchant men, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. He made two hundred targets of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of gold went to one target. The king also made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth, for riches and for wisdom: and all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year." (1 Kings x. 11, &c. "And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty, as had not been on any king before him in Israel." (1 Chron. xxix. 25.)

What an exorbitant description! Nothing could possibly be devised, to give us a greater idea, of the glory and flourishing state of the Jewish nation in Solomon's time, and of the fulfilment of God's promise, to multiply and exalt his people Israel. But all this magnificence, glory, wealth,

and honour, are but faint and fading emblems of the infinite and eternal glory, and the unbounded and heavenly majesty, of Him who is King of Sion. The beautiful attire of the lilies of the field is far beyond the clothing of Solomon, in all his glory; but our Jesus shines in robes of light and celestial glory—the antitype of all excellency, beauty, and glory, in the earthly or the heavenly world. His riches are riches which never fade nor fail: his majesty is the majesty of eternal power; his honours are the honours of the Divine nature; his glories, the glories of the Godhead, his praise is above heaven and earth; and all the powers and principalities in heavenly places offer before him their worship and their services. By him and for him, and therefore for his glory, all things were and are created. He is Lord of all, who is our Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. In him, therefore, there is an infinite sufficiency for the wants and for the happiness of his people. All things are theirs, who belong to Christ; because all things are his, and must be his, to dispose and order them as he sees best. He giveth grace and glory, and withholds no good thing from his people. He can clothe and enrich the poor, the blind, the naked, with gold tried in the fire, and that shall never fail. (Rev. iii. 18.) His presence in the second temple, though appearing in his humiliation, gave a greater glory to that inferior building, than all the gold and silver that blazed round the walls of the temple of Solomon, and dazzled the eyes of the astonished worshippers within its courts. “The glory of the latter temple shall be greater than that of the former, because in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.” (Hag. ii. 9.)

5. The *extent* of the kingdom of Solomon is another circumstance, in which he appears an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ.—All Israel submitted to his authority: surrounding nations were tributary to him, and brought their offerings to the foot of his throne. (1 Kings ix. 20, &c.; x. 24, 25.) But our Jesus has an absolutely universal kingdom: he reigns over Israel his people for ever, and is Head over all things to his church,—the King of

kings, the Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth. He has received dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. vii. 14.) To him every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." On earth, the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. xi. 15): and in heaven, he sits upon the eternal throne; and "as the Lord God Omnipotent, he reigneth for ever and ever." (Rev. xix. 6.)

But there is one circumstance which was peculiar to Solomon, and which alone belongs, in its spiritual application, to the King Immanuel. While we behold Solomon building the temple at Jerusalem, by God's appointment, to the name and to the glory of Jehovah (2 Chron. iii.—vii.), we are directed to behold a greater than Solomon, erecting the temple of his church to his eternal glory; a spiritual temple, which shall stand throughout eternity, the monument of his wisdom, his riches, and his power. He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory. (Zech. vi. 12, 13.) We are told, that, "the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." (1 Kings vi. 7, 8.) So shall every lively stone in the living temple be prepared, by the providence of God and the work of his Spirit, before it be brought to be laid in the temple above: afflictions, trials, and temptations are here hewing and forming it for the place which it shall there hold; that there may be no hewing or cutting there, but that all, being prepared and formed by the Divine hand, may be placed in their appointed situations, to complete the heavenly building, and to shine there without interruption, throughout eternity. The multitude of sacrifices which were offered there to

consecrate the sacred building, though so immensely great, were infinitely beneath the dignity and sufficiency of his. “Twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep” were sacrificed on that occasion; but we are “redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” When sacrifice and offering the Lord did not require nor delight in, “then said he, Lo! I come, to do thy will, O God: he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” He lays down his own life, and redeems his church to himself with his own blood. How infinite the value, how wondrous the act of love and condescension! We see the king of Israel then stretching forth his hands to God in supplication for the people, who made their offerings there in the temple he had erected (1 Kings viii.); but faith beholds the constant and prevalent intercession of the Redeemer for all who come unto God through him. Through faith we come and come again to God in this temple, through the atonement and intercession of Jesus, assured that, “if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins.” “And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us nor forsake us.” But Solomon could only supplicate and entreat the blessing; whereas our Jesus is the true Blessor of his people. We are now blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: all who are in him are blessed, and soon he will return to pronounce and bestow the full and eternal blessing, “Come,

ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Glorious type, but still more glorious Antitype! May he be glorious in our eyes, that we may fly to and rest beneath his care, recline under his government, and become the believing and obedient subjects of the glorious King of Israel, the *King of Peace*! If the daughters of Sion were called to behold King Solomon, much more justly may his saints be called to behold and admire the beauty of their exalted Prince and King. "Go forth, ye spiritual daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." The daughters of Sion now are his saints, born into his church and family by the Spirit of life from him, as a pure virgin; clothed with his righteousness, without spot before him, and complete in him before God. None but such will admire the glory of Jesus their King and their Friend: but to them who believe he is precious; and, having not seen, they yet love him, as they realize his glories by the eye of faith. The relation in which he stands to them engages their attention, to the glories of his person, the wonders of his grace, the wisdom of his government, and the blessings of his kingdom. He offers himself to the view of his people in the discoveries of his word, in his precious promises, in his ordinances, and particularly in the sacramental emblems of his body and blood. There they delight to behold and to admire him. We join, then, the admonition or exhortation of the sacred writer, Go forth, ye daughters of Sion; go forth from carnal ease, sensible sloth and lukewarmness; from the world, from self-dependence, and from sin, from earthly attachments, amusements, and self-gratification: these will but veil his glory, but obscure and darken the eye of faith, and prevent your beholding the glory of your all-glorious Lord. No one can ever behold Christ Jesus right, but by turning from all besides. See how he exhorts his beloved; "Rise up, my love, my fair

one, and come away." We are too apt to sink into earthly affections, and consequent spiritual lukewarmness. Hence we attain but slight and feeble views of Christ, of his glory and his grace; and hence we interrupt our intercourse and communion with him. Arise, therefore, says the Prophet, shake thyself from the dust, thou captive daughter of Sion. Now let faith discharge its office, while it beholds and contemplates the glories of our blessed Jesus. Behold with attention, with affection, with admiration, and wonder: look and believe, look and wonder, look and love. "Behold his crown with which his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart;" realize the beauty, the excellency, the glory, the riches, the extent, the stability of his kingdom; and learn daily to trust and rejoice in him. In his word he is set forth in all his glories, the glory of his wisdom, grace, love, and power; upon his head are many crowns, particularly the crown of redemption. This is that especial crown which his church delights to put upon the head of her Lord; for every act of faith is, as it were, placing the crown of redemption on the head of Jesus. This is the joy of his heart, his glory in the day of his espousals, when he brings his church to himself. Let his saints delight to behold and contemplate this crown of their adored Lord, with the faith of humble and secure reliance. Exalted to reign for the benefit of his people, to accomplish all the purposes of his redeeming love, He will transact all the concerns of his people, till he has brought them to himself by grace, and around his throne in glory. There not one of his redeemed shall be lost; He will present them all, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, triumphant over every enemy, &c. Let faith realize this, when lamenting over the remaining corruption of nature, the power of the enemy, or the force of mighty temptations. When labouring through difficulties, or when ready to sink under affliction and trouble, fix, O believer! fix the eye of faith upon the exalted Redeemer; upon the

covenant of his redeeming love, upon the design and purpose of his exaltation ; and, believing his promise, thou shalt triumph through him.

— Soon all the chosen seed
Shall meet around the throne,
To bless the conduct of his grace
And make his wonders known.

Behold his glory, O believer ! when thus crowned with many crowns, with love and holy delight. What object can be so pleasing, can so engage my attention and admiration, as my Jesus on the throne, the Head over all things to his church ! How deep his condescension, how astonishing his wisdom, how infinite and all-sufficient his grace, and how incomprehensible his glories ! Let me behold him with unfeigned submission and cheerful obedience. If he rules, he will rule right, in wisdom and truth, in judgment and in righteousness. He demands and deserves my entire submission ; and what can be more delightful than to live in obedience to him ? But, like Solomon, he will justly punish the guilty. If sinners refuse his authority, and will not have him to reign in their heart, vain will be the resistance of the proudest rebels ; for he must reign till he has put all enemies beneath his feet. God has exalted him and anointed him as the King of Sion. Let all kings then submit to him, who must be King of kings and Lord of lords. “ Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” Happy is the penitent subject who falls submissive at his feet. He will magnify his great mercy in pardoning the guilty rebel ; and will magnify his power, his grace, and glory, in the salvation of all his people. Soon shall he sit on the throne of glory, with every crown at his feet, with every crown upon his head, to reign for ever and ever. Then shall his saints behold, glorify, and enjoy him, and delight in all the blessings and privileges, in all the majesty and glory, of his peaceful kingdom, throughout eternity.

ESSAY XI.

The Truth.

WHENEVER the blessed Redeemer is describing his own character, he gives us the most exalted views of his self-sufficiency and intrinsic glory. He uses terms, not of a relative or general, but of a definite and abstract, nature; not only attributing to himself the possession of certain qualities and excellencies, but shewing that he is those very qualities and excellencies themselves; or, that they are, in fact, his very self. Thus, he not only calls himself a way, but eminently *the Way*; not only hath he life, or the power of life, but he is *the Life*; not only did he rise from the dead, and hath power to raise the dead, but he is the *Resurrection*; not only can he save his people, but he is *their Salvation*; not only is he the Redeemer, but *the Redemption of Israel*; and not only is he true and faithful, possessed of, and exercising, the most unchangeable truth, but he is *The Truth*. These are terms which no mere man could dare to apply to himself. They imply claims which no created being could venture to make; so that unless our great Teacher himself deceives us, He must be the very self and essence of all righteousness, glory, and perfections.

When we say of any thing that it is true, we mean that it hath a conformity to some given rule or pattern; but of no person or thing upon earth can we say properly that it is "the truth," which is the very rule and pattern by which all things are to be tried: but this the Lord Jesus Christ affirms of himself, and thereby gives us a most peculiar view of his own glory and perfection. A few particulars will illustrate this, and present the blessed Redeemer in a

new and most interesting light, as the object of our faith and love.

As he is essentially the Truth, he must be,

Himself *the pattern and prototype of all truth, or of all which is true.*—This is a view of which we can have but a faint conception; yet we can conceive of it better than we can express it. It holds forth the Redeemer as the sum, substance, and perfection of every excellency; as Infinite Rectitude and Faithfulness itself; as the root, the essence, and the cause of all. As such, he must be esteemed as the most glorious pattern, to whom every thing in our sentiments, views, words, and actions, must be exactly conformed, to be just and right. He was therefore set up mediatorially from everlasting, as the true wisdom, the fountain and the pattern of all: and hence the Apostle describes him as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. As far then as he is revealed to us in his person, his character, and his glory, nothing can be true but what corresponds with him. Such also is his Gospel; for he came to bear witness unto the truth. (John xviii. 37.) That divine system of holy doctrine which he hath revealed, that glorious plan of salvation he hath discovered, is unerring and unchangeable truth, as it is the copy of himself. I have not written unto you, says the Apostle, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. (1 John ii. 21.) All his commandments are true; and he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John ii. 4.) Under this name that same Apostle, the beloved disciple of his Master, delights to speak of him, and of his doctrines. "For the Truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." (2 John 2, 3.) "I rejoiced greatly when I found of thy children walking in the truth." (ver. 4.) This is a most important view, included in the character of our Lord; but to explain it is beyond

our finite powers : we can but little conceive of, and not at all understand, the essences of things, and must therefore be content to speak but little of them : our duty is to believe, admire, and adore.

Let us descend upon a ground more level to our finite capacities and observe,

In his character upon earth as man, and as God-man, *his exact conformity to this pattern of heavenly and eternal perfection.*—When “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John i. 14. In his person and character, as well as in his teaching, he bore witness unto the truth. He was on earth the living exemplar of all excellency and designs of glory : and in this view only could he say, as he did to Philip (John xiv. 9), “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” This is the view which is most generally taken of this subject : the former view is, however, the more exact, as it is the very ground of this. For being in himself the Truth, he must be every thing which is true ; and this is our un-failing security in following his pattern, and in obeying his voice. A variety of particulars are naturally connected with our subject, in tracing his declarations ; and this view of his character will discover the excellency of the Redeemer, and confirm our confidence in him.

1. He is the Truth *in all the instructions and doctrines which he declares.*—The testimony which he bears as to the Father, as to himself, and as to the Holy Ghost, the nature of the Godhead, the persons in the Godhead, the distinct works and offices of the Divine Persons, is the truth of God. The view he gives us of ourselves, of our nature, of the depravity of the heart, and the guilt and misery of our state, is the truth concerning man. The declaration he makes of his own person and work, his atonement, righteousness, and salvation, is the truth as to God’s only way of saving guilty sinners. And the various discoveries which he makes of the nature and vanity of this world, and the glories and blessings of the world unseen, will be

ound to be the only truth concerning these things ; exhibiting the vanity of the present state, the emptiness of all its enjoyments, and the dignity, value, pre-eminence, and excellency of the eternal world, in all its spiritual and holy, though unseen, felicity.

As he is in heaven the eternal Prototype of all truth and excellency, so his character and his declarations on earth are the pattern and the rule of all truth and holiness. We might, therefore, with perfect confidence, rest the truth of every doctrine upon the words of Christ himself, and refuse whatever could not be proved by his own personal declarations. Yet, let it never be supposed, that those declarations can be in contradiction to the inspired writings of Prophets or Apostles ; for, as spoken or written under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, these never can be opposed to the doctrine of Christ himself. The truth is this, that though in his own words we find every doctrine of revelation alluded to ; yet, under the influence of his Spirit, those very doctrines are enlarged upon, and more clearly explained, by the writings of his Apostles—writings which must be equally invaluable, because, whatever may be the channel of conveyance, they are equally the words of Christ. In the one, he hath personally spoken in human nature upon earth ; in the other, under the direction and movement of his own Eternal Spirit from heaven. This Spirit he promised to them, to lead them into all truth. And, while speaking under his direction, the Apostle declares they had the mind of Christ. (See 1 Cor. ii. 4—10, and 16.) We do not, however, fear, in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, even if the enemy of that faith should refuse us the use of any other of the weapons which the book of revelation hath so amply provided for us, but the personal instructions of our Lord ; for in these we shall find every grand truth of the Gospel plainly stated, and most decisively and authoritatively maintained. Thus, with regard to the depravity and corruption of human nature, he hath declared, “ No man can come to me, except the Father,

which hath sent me, draw him." (John vi. 44.) With regard to his own person and glory, he hath said, "I and my Father are one;"—"All things that the Father hath are mine." And as to the design of his condescension, he hath told us, that "he came to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) And again; "I lay down my life for the sheep." He considers the state of man as a state of death, and the effect produced by his grace and Spirit as a resurrection from the dead: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (John v. 25.) He most solemnly insists upon the necessity of a Divine power to regenerate and sanctify the heart, when he declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John iii. 3.) The nature and efficacy of faith is most decisively stated by himself, when he says, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) The necessary effect of a true and living faith, in producing holiness of heart and life, is further maintained, when he declares, that "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," &c. (Matt. vii. 18.)

This, however, is not the place to enlarge upon the nature of the doctrines which he hath taught: these hints may be sufficient to prove the sufficiency of his teaching, in all the fundamental truths and doctrines of his Gospel. And hence the most serious attention, and the most implicit faith, are due to the Divine instructions of this great Prophet and Teacher of the church of God. Whatever he hath spoken as to himself, in his person, his design, his work, and the benefit of his salvation; whatever he hath spoken as to my state, and the way of accepting and enjoying that salvation, after all the vain reasoning of philosophy; will be found to be the truth in fact, the truth of God.

If, then, he be the Truth; if all he hath spoken be infallible truth, it was with the greatest reason he said, that "if any man receive not the kingdom of God as a little

child, he cannot enter therein." It becomes us, with the simplicity and teachableness of children, only to inquire what he hath spoken; and when once this point is determined, it is not our part to reason but to believe; to receive his declarations, as a child receives the precepts, the dictates, the injunctions of a father; and to bring every thing to be tried, and to measure all things, by his word, as the most undoubted, the best, test of doctrine and of practice. The most fruitful source of error is an attachment to previous sentiments, formed in the mind independent of the word of God, and an indulgence of those corrupt reasonings which, springing from them, oppose the evident dictates of revelation. Hence arises an aversion of heart to the truth; or, at least, an unwillingness to receive the plainest declarations of the Divine word. Hence so frequently the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; and men love darkness rather than light, when it opposes the corrupt prejudices of their understandings, as well as the corrupt inclinations of their hearts. But the ministers of Christ must not be afraid boldly, confidently, and zealously, to declare whatever their Divine Master hath taught; "and every one who is of the truth, will hear his voice." So plain are the declarations he hath made, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein; and wherever these are doubted or denied, it will be found to arise, not from a want of wisdom in our Divine Teacher, nor of evidence as to the doctrine or the truth itself; but the want of a humble spirit, a simple teachable disposition; or from some improper prejudice, that maintains its influence in the mind. Blessed Jesus! thy words are truth: may thy Spirit of Truth incline our hearts to receive and acknowledge them; that, receiving the Spirit which is of God, we may know the things which are freely given to us of thee.

In another point of view, our blessed Redeemer is,

2. *The Truth of all the types, the shadows, and ceremonies, of the Jewish dispensation.*—These all related to

him, and were fulfilled in his person, character, office, and work; or shall be fulfilled in his eternal government, and realized, in their fullest designs, in his eternal salvation. The whole was, indeed, given for this express purpose, to be an emblematical representation of his glory, and of his salvation; and, could we enter into the consideration of every part, we should see every part exhibiting more of the glories of our Redeemer. We cannot, however, be mistaken, as to the great and leading objects. He is the true Tabernacle and Temple, in which the Divine glory personally inhabited, when he tabernacled among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.) He is the great High Priest of our profession, in whom all the real glories of that typical person meet, and in whom all the parts of his offices are completed. In him was accomplished all that was prefigured in the feast of tabernacles, the solemn day of atonement, the joyful feast of the passover, or the triumphant year of jubilee. In his person, we behold the Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world. And in his voluntary suffering, we behold the Lamb led to the slaughter, while the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. Then, like the scape-goat, or the living bird let loose, he rose and ascended to the heavens, carrying away the sins of his people into the land of forgetfulness, having completed the atonement, and obtained eternal redemption for his people. And now he stands in the holy place, not made with hands, into which he entered by the virtue of his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us, that we might have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by this new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, &c. (See Heb. ix. 11—14; x. 19--23.) What a suitable Mediator between God and man!

May we always behold thee, blessed Jesus! in every figure and ceremony of the Law, while we see them all done away, because fulfilled in thee; and all their typical bless-

ings laid up in their eternal reality in thyself, who art the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth! He is also,

3. *The Truth of all the Prophecies.*—Some of these had been long waiting for their accomplishment; and believers had been long waiting in expectation; but they became clearer as they advanced towards their completion, and the language in which they are declared is more expressive and determinate. But behold, at length, is heard “the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord:” and then, “in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” How exactly do his person and character correspond with the prophetic prediction! Is he not the Seed of the woman, of the virgin, the Seed of Abraham, the Offspring of David? Is he not born in Bethlehem Ephratah? Is not the sceptre departing from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, and the second temple yet remaining? How humbly he grows up, as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground! (Isa. liii. 2.) “And as the servant of the Lord, he does not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: he neither breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax.” (Isa. xlii. 2, 3.) “But who is this that opens the eyes of the blind, unstops the ears of the deaf, makes the lame man to leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing?” (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.) Surely it is the Lord God, come with vengeance and with a recompense, to save his people (verse 4): and yet he appears as despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! How astonishing, how unusual, how little to be expected, the union of such glory, benevolence, and kindness, with such contempt and ignominy! But behold, “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed,” &c. Read the whole passage (Isa. liii. 3–12); and then go to Gethsemane, to the judgment seat, to the foot of the cross, and to the dark and dreary tomb. Surely this is He, and

none else, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. But though he dies, he prolongs his days. (ver. 10—12.) And who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Behold the conquering Redeemer. Then, lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of Glory shall come in. In this sense he might justly say, “It is finished;” for thus all things are fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him; for thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. And if the Law was a shadow of good things to come, the body is of Christ.—He is the Truth also,

4. *In all his covenant engagements for his people.*—In the counsels of eternity, he is represented as undertaking the work which was necessary for the redemption of his people; and engaging to accomplish, because none other could accomplish it, all that might render the perfections of God honourable, and his law and government glorious, in the salvation of sinners. He looked, and there was none to help, and he saw that there was none to uphold, when his own arm brought salvation. Then he said, “Lo! I come, to do thy will, O God,” &c. The work, therefore, which he did upon earth in our nature, which he took for the purposes of fulfilling it, was the actual completion of all his engagements. Nothing is wanting, nothing can be added to the glorious work of his redemption: he wrought out, and brought in, an everlasting righteousness (Dan. ix. 24), “when he finished transgression and made an end of sin.” This is the ground of the Apostle’s argument in Heb. x.: This High Priest, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. And as there is no defect in his work, so there can be no uncertainty in its

application ; for his covenant promise secures to all believers full forgiveness of sins and renewing grace. (ver. 12—17.) The conclusion is suited to such helpless sinners for their hope and joy : “ For, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh ; having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. (ver. 18—23.) Thus the Apostle tells the Colossians (ii. 10), that they are complete in Christ. How complete in him, but because every thing is complete in him that a believing sinner can want for his deliverance from sin and death, and for his eternal salvation. In him we have the fulness of all the blessings held forth by Jewish or Christian ordinances ; in him we are redeemed from death ; God hath forgiven all our trespasses, blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, nailing it to his cross, and given us the victory over all our enemies. (ver. 11—15.) For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, and hath obtained eternal redemption for his people.

Without this never could he have become our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and redemption ; but now, as all the covenant terms have been completed by him, all the covenant blessings are treasured up in him. We have all in him, and receive all from him, that we may give all glory to him. The perfection of atonement, righteousness, obedience, and redemption is in him ; in whom the righteousness of God is manifested that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. (See Rom. iii. 21—26.) And the result of all is, that, therefore, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. This was the triumph of the faith of ancient believers in the church of old ; and surely it is not

the less the triumph of faith in the New Testament church, when the redeemed have actually come to Sion; “ Sing, O ye heavens! for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth! break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest! and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” He will as surely fulfil all his covenant engagements, in the application of this redemption to the heart of his people. He will call, sanctify, justify, preserve, and save all his redeemed people. Thus he has been, is, and will be eternally, the Truth,

5. *In fulfilling all his promises to them, and realizing all the expectations of faith.*—In this view, heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall never pass from his word *till all be fulfilled*. It never can, and it never shall, be said, that one promise of God in Christ Jesus hath ever failed, or disappointed the faith of the humble believer: none can ever say, I trusted in him and was not helped. Notwithstanding difficulties, enemies, opposing circumstances; notwithstanding that all may appear contrary to the expectation of faith, if that faith be grounded upon the word and promise of God, it shall not be disappointed. Thus Abraham, against hope, believed in hope; and though every thing in nature opposed the fulfilment of the Divine promise, he was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and the end justified his confidence in the fulfilment of all his hopes. Thus all the promises of God in Christ are in him yea, and in him amen.

The experience of the ancient believers stands on record to encourage our weak and wavering faith: they waited through faith and patience, and they were often called to wait long; the promise was delayed, but the accomplishment was sure. Though the vision tarry, wait for it, said the prophet (Hab. ii. 3, 4); for it will speak and not lie: in the end it will come and will not tarry. In God’s appointed time, there shall be no delay. Wait on the Lord, says the Psalmist; be of good courage, and he will strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psal. xxvii. 14.)

Waiting faith is the most important, as it gives most glory to God, brings the greatest peace into the heart, and assuredly obtains the blessing in the end. The Apostle, therefore, rejoices in the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, which the Thessalonians had been enabled to exercise in their tribulation. (1 Thess. i. 3.) The dispensations of God towards his church are often so disposed as to require, and to call forth, such a patient waiting for his appearance: and he who can most unremittingly trust his wisdom, goodness, power, and faithfulness, discovers most of that faith which is the very life of the Christian life, and ought to be the very principle of all his actions. The Lord our Redeemer will be found the Faithful and the True Witness; and his people shall ultimately be called to bear the same testimony as the church of old: "Ye know in all your heart and in all your soul, that not one good thing hath failed you of all that the Lord hath spoken concerning you; all hath come to pass," &c. (Jos. xxiii. 14.) What a view does this present to us of him who is the Hope and Help of his people, that blessed Jesus who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! While he realizes all his promises to the returning sinner, of pardon, justification, peace, and joy; while he realizes all his promises to his believing people, of strength, goodness, preservation, and consolation; O how exceeding great and precious are those promises! and what a prospect opens in them to the view of faith! But as they were not too great for him to give, we may be confident that they will not be too great for him to fulfil, though they engage his eternal power throughout eternity.

This view of him will confirm what every view of his Divine person, offices, and works must ever confirm, our confidence in his Divine power as the God of Truth. Such, indeed, he is; God manifest in the flesh, the Word that was with God, and was become flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth. Let him, then, be the Object of our adoration, who is the sum, the Arche-

type of all our excellency and perfection. Nothing is true, nothing is just, nothing is excellent, but as it is conformed to him, to his character, or to his will: our hearts may, therefore, well admire and adore him, who is indeed altogether lovely, glorious in his designs, lovely in his human and mediatorial excellency, “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” Those who know his glory do adore and love, and all the angels of God delight to worship him; who must therefore be—or angels could never bow down to him in the presence of the Father—one with the Father on the eternal throne. How dangerous then must it be for men to disbelieve or disobey! Though men may choose to reason against the truth of his Gospel, they never can change his declarations, nor prove them to be untrue. If they indulge their own vain imagination, or the corrupt prejudice of their hearts in aversion to his truth; such insult cast upon the infinite wisdom of Immanuel can only aggravate their guilt and secure their destruction. His own honour stands engaged to prove his truth; and if men will not submit their understandings to his revelation, their pride must meet with its due recompence in his displeasure. If men will not submit to his authority and his commands, he will be found true to his threatening, when he comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) Let the proud reasoner and the careless sinner equally tremble at their guilt and danger, and bow with humble submission at the foot of the Cross, to the exalted Saviour in humiliation, penitence, faith, and love. But if his people believe and trust his promises, he will be found the proper object of their unlimited confidence. He has been found the Truth of the types, the prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament dispensation. He has been the Truth in all his covenant engagements, and will be to the end: his people have therefore sufficient to encourage

their expectations, and may put implicit reliance upon him for the time to come. In all their dangers and fears, amidst all their enemies and trials, notwithstanding all their guilt, weakness, doubts, and gloomy apprehensions, He will realize his character and office towards his people, and will ensure all the blessings connected with them in the experience of his saints, even to the uttermost expectation of faith, and the least assurance of his promises.

If unbelief prevail in the heart of the believer for a time, its effects will most certainly be, to introduce darkness into the mind, guilt into the conscience, murmuring and fretfulness into the spirit, and unholy tempers into the heart, and unhallowed attempts to procure premature deliverance. But it can do nothing towards effecting that deliverance, or to change the state or circumstances which oppress the mind. While simple faith and reliance upon the truth and promises of the Redeemer, is the great mean of receiving all from him, as it gives all glory to him; to the exercise of this faith his promise is annexed; and, while it goes forth to him in the prayer of faith, it brings supply of strength, grace, holiness, and joy, into the heart, and thus the joy of the Lord becomes the strength of his people. And believing, they are established, grounded, and built up in the faith, as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, the essential Truth of God, the Truth of all the word and promises of God! give us faith to believe and trust thee; and realize all thy characters, thy covenant engagements and thy promises to us: then, receiving all in and from thee, Thou, the Eternal Truth, shalt have the glory throughout eternity!

ESSAY XII.

Invisible.

THIS character of the Lord Jesus Christ does not appear to be very prolific in profitable ideas; yet it will be found to contain more than is evident at first, and to advance the proofs of his Divine Power and Godhead. That Jesus who once dwelt on earth, and there manifested his glory as the only-begotten of the Father—who, in his mediatorial character, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, the image of the invisible God—is now no longer seen of mortal eyes; for the heavens have received him till the time of the restitution of all things.

He is now, in every point of view, the object only of faith, as all spiritual and heavenly things are; and as such he is the object of our love, whom having not seen we love, because to them only who believe he is precious. But the title belongs to him, in its most exalted and mysterious view, as he is one with the Father, and therefore in eternal union with the Father; and in no other sense can it be applied to him in the manner in which it evidently is in 1 Tim. vi. 16, where it is expressly said of that Jesus, who witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, who shall come again in his glory, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords; that “he dwelleth in the light which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” This description gives us authority to apply it to the Lord Jesus Christ, and affords us a most exalted view of his person and glory, inconceivable, beyond our imagination or comprehension; and, in this light, it is worthy of our most serious attention, and will excite our

adoration and awe. Whether the term be referred to the Father or the Son, or the essential Godhead, we cannot suppose that it only means that he is absent or unseen. This, which is so obvious and manifest, would have been beneath the apostolic observation, or our attention; but it indicates that the person to whom it is to be applied is so glorious, as to be infinitely removed from our observation, or the discernment of our finite understandings; and, that the glories of his person, the secret of his designs, the motives and arrangements of his government, and the method of his communications, are beyond our intelligence, and known only to his own omniscient mind. And when these considerations are applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, they must exalt our ideas of his inconceivable excellency, and lead us to adore him, as one in the unseen, invisible, and incomprehensible Jehovah.

His personal or essential glories are no doubt the principal subject which the Apostle had in view in this appellation, and to which all the other ideas connected with it are subservient. In these he is not only unseen, but these never can be seen, in their true essential excellency. Neither men nor angels can ever adequately conceive of them, nor can any outward representation ever exhibit them. He stands throughout eternity the same, incomprehensibly glorious. The full glories of his Divinity are beyond the most exalted finite intelligence (because, that which is finite can never reach to that which is infinite); in all its approaches these must still remain at an infinite distance, unobserved and unobservable, unattained and unattainable. This evidently is the view of the Apostle; in that same passage before quoted. (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.) And in allusion to this, the highest orders of the angelic world are represented as hiding their faces with their wings, in his immediate presence. When the Apostle had some slight glance of that heavenly world, he saw things which it is not lawful (or rather, such displays, such sights, as it is not possible) for a man to utter. The Prophet Isaiah (chap. vi.) had once a similar view of his glory, when his train

filled the temple, and he was surrounded with the adoring seraphim. At the sight, the Prophet trembled at his own impurity, till aided by the Divine power and strengthened; and yet we are told that he then beheld the glory of our Redeemer, and spake of him. (John xii. 41: compare also Daniel x.) Another similar view produced similar effects upon the beloved disciple; who, beneath the mighty display of the glory of the Redeemer, fell at his feet as dead: yet these are but parts of his ways, while but a little portion is known of him. The bursting forth of his glory through his human nature, on the mount of transfiguration, overwhelmed the power of his Apostle; and the same glory manifested in the road to Damascus, disarmed the fury of the persecuting Saul, and deprived him of the power, while his grace deprived him of the disposition, to destroy his people.

What then must be his glory in the heavens, in the heaven of heavens! Who can by searching find out God? who can find out the Almighty to perfection,—him who was, and is, and is to come? We adore thee, thou invisible, incomprehensible, Redeemer; glorious as God-man, Immanuel; glorious as thou hast by various manifestations revealed thyself to thy church, but infinitely beyond all which we conceive, or ever can conceive, in thy Divine nature. The infinite, the eternal, the eternally unseen and unknown; known only to thyself; whose infinite knowledge can alone comprehend all the other infinite and eternal perfections of thy nature.

From the infinity and incomprehensibility of his nature, it is no wonder that he is,

I. Invisible—*i. e.* beyond our views and comprehension—in all his designs. Ah, Lord God! said the admiring Prophet, “behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee, &c. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his name; great in counsel and mighty in work.” (Jer. xxxii. 17—19.) The incomprehensibility of God is discerned in the works of nature, and,

if it be our **Jesus**, as the **Apostle** declares, by whom all things were created, whether visible or invisible, &c. then it is **He** who is the author of all these wonders. **He** sustains, he supports, he carries on, he directs them all. **Here** we are continually involved in depths of wisdom which we cannot fathom. The meanest of his works is beyond our comprehension; the principle of life which, in its vegetative influence, invigorates a blade of grass; the various diversities of kind, all of which preserve their distinct order; the principle of animal life which animates a worm, and the various gradations from the lowest animal existence, through the different orders of rational life, up to that highest intellectual life which animates the highest order of angelic beings, are altogether removed from the sphere of our knowledge, in the lowest as much as in the highest. Shall we wonder, therefore, to observe the same incomprehensibility of mind in the dispensations of his providence? While we mark the outward arrangement, the reasons of his actings are hid in his eternal mind, and, like himself, are unseen, and cannot be seen; the glorious invisible Director, by secret springs, to us unobserved, by causes to us unknown, from motives to us concealed, carries on the purposes of his providence, and conducts the concerns of universal nature towards the final accomplishment of his great designs.

But if such is the mysterious design of Providence, much more might we expect to behold unfathomable mystery in the origin and designs of his grace; in which his infinite goodness, justice, and grace, have exhausted, if we may so speak, all their infinite and eternal fulness. Who could then expect to understand these wonders of the Almighty, or clearly to comprehend his plan, his conduct, or his ways? This is the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God: this is the mystery of Christ (Eph. iii. 3, 4, 9): this is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. (1 Cor.

ii. 6—10.) How then shall we expect fully to understand this part of the dealings and arrangements of Jehovah, which is always represented in Scripture as the greatest display of the Divine wisdom, when we cannot understand any of his inferior disposals? What assuming pride? What insolent presumption? Arising often from a disposition averse to his law, and to his way of salvation. How contrary to the child-like simplicity of faith, of which our Lord himself hath said, “ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” In all the ways of God, enough is related to discern his hand, and the glory and the wisdom of his ways; enough is discerned to direct us to love and to obey him; while in the most of his ways there are parts which rise above our conception, and mysteries which we must leave him to solve; and, till he please, in his sovereign wisdom; to do this, we must refer them to the unsearchableness of his counsels, and the ignorance of our finite understandings.

Here he is incomprehensible in his person; for great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16); unsearchable in his plans and counsels, which, being a mystery hid in God, will, when further revealed, make known to principalities in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. iii. 9, 10), and beyond our conception in the glory he hath provided, and which eternity shall never exhaust or diminish. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

He is beyond our view and comprehension,

2. *In the plans of his universal government.*—“ His ways are not as our ways, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.” (Isa. lv. 8, 9.) The Prophet is doubtless here speaking of his ways of mercy and grace to the returning sinner, and would lead us to admiring confidence in the sovereignty and infinite abundance of that grace, which no human measure nor limits can describe.

As the moral Governor of the world, his word describes his designs, and the determined method of his actings

towards his creatures. But in the fulfilment of these, his infinite wisdom often infinitely surpasses our feeble intelligence. When man became a sinner, he forfeited his right to every blessing; which can now be received only in the way of sovereign grace, through the means of God's own appointment. The plan of providence, therefore, is now, by his sovereign appointment, carried on through the hands of a Mediator, and the government of all things is in and by Christ Jesus; who, being raised from the dead, and set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, &c. hath all things put under his feet, and is constituted the Head over all things to his church. It is he, therefore, who now governs the world, and orders and conducts all things, by his own almighty power and infinite wisdom, for the benefit of his church. His ways are, indeed, often in the deep, and his footsteps are not known; but through dark and gloomy dispensations, it is his design often to produce the most glorious results. He suffers his enemies to prevail for a season, that he may more effectually, and more triumphantly, break their power; and permits them to endanger the safety of his people, that his hand may become more glorious in their deliverance. How often does he lead his people through troubles, trials, and temptations, which shake their faith, and alarm their fears! The cloudy and mysterious dispensation excites their unbelief; but in the mount the Lord is seen; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah lifts up the standard against him. He brings good out of evil, joy out of sorrow, victory out of weakness, and triumph out of defeat, till the light affliction, which is for a moment, works out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus, in all his dealings, as well as in his person, he is the object of faith and not of sense. All true religion is walking by faith, and not by sense: it is living as seeing him who is invisible: it is trusting in the Lord with all the heart—trusting in his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his promises, and his faithfulness to

fulfil them ; and so it is to rest satisfied with all his dispensations. It is this which interests the believer, and enables him not only to wait upon, but to wait for, the Lord ; till he appear in his providence, till he render his ways plain and intelligible ; and which will keep the believer in the exercise of faith, still waiting to the end, to see the end of the Lord, and assuredly he will discover his wisdom, goodness, grace, and faithfulness, in the ultimate result of all his ways. Thus, having not seen, we love the adorable Saviour (1 Pet. i. 8) ; and, by that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, we declare ourselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. The believer is not surprised that he cannot account for all his dispensations ; he does not expect to see and understand every thing in the Divine economy. He knows that in their arrangement, motives, designs, and end, they are infinitely beyond his comprehension ; that we can see but little of his ways, and are therefore very incompetent to judge of the whole. The insolent pride, and the vain attempts of man to comprehend the ways of God, are worthy of the severest rebuke. While he chooses to find fault with the Divine economy, or endeavours to rectify the order of Infinite Wisdom, he only discovers his own ignorance and folly :

“ As if, upon a full proportioned dome,
 On swelling columns heav'd, the pride of art,
 A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
 An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
 Should dare to tax the structure of the whole.”

But if, in the economy of his dispensations, we are confounded, much more so in the depth of the Divine wisdom and Divine counsel, in the higher truths and doctrines of his word ; yet as he hath plainly revealed what is sufficient for us to know, where he speaks beyond our finite views, it becomes us to submit our understandings and reason to his decisive declarations ; for who will dare to deny when the Lord hath spoken ? God will be true,

though every man be a liar; and the truth of the Divine word will stand, when all the reasoning of men shall be confounded, and shall answer no other purpose than to sink the bold blasphemer into destruction, for his arrogant opposition to the word of God.

3. He is invisible also, *in all his communications of a spiritual nature, to the spirits of his people*, which are now conducted by the secret influences of his Holy Spirit. This is that other Teacher, Advocate, and Comforter, which he hath sent down from heaven, and still sends down from the Father and himself, to supply his place, ever since he personally withdrew from instructing his disciples, and which he promises shall attend in his church for ever. It is he,—it is his secret but powerful influence, that carries on the plan of redeeming love; that calls, that teaches, that sanctifies, that preserves; that takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them to his people; that brings the inward experience of his love and grace, and so observes, conducts, and regulates it, till it terminate in the vision and enjoyment of his glory.

Thus the life of a believer which is hid with Christ in God, is carried on in secret communication with God in Christ Jesus; and he hath fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the Spirit. The spiritual life, which is hidden in its principle in God, is maintained by the hidden secret principle of faith, as the Apostle has beautifully expressed it: “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” The spiritual life therefore, in its power and its operations, its actings and its enjoyments, is known only to the believer. He only hath fellowship with Christ, and fellowship in the Gospel, that is, in all its power and blessings. It is the Spirit of Jesus, whose secret influences, though unseen in their origin, are felt and sensibly perceived in their effects, that carries forward that life in the illumination of the understanding, and the sanctification of the heart in spiritual desires and enjoyments; in the spiritual exercises of spiritual duties, in the advancement

of holy tempers and dispositions, and by the preservation of the soul in them through all opposition, corruption, and temptation; till it break forth in its full powers of activity and enjoyment in the world above, or till the time when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, and all his people shall appear with him in glory. But here, let the believer beware of putting fancied visions, impressions, and revelations, in place of the exercises of dependence, love, and obedience; for to be deceived by the delusion of a wild imagination, instead of the wise and sanctifying efficacy of God the Holy Ghost, may have the most awful and destructive effects. His communications are indeed spiritual, and therefore must be unseen: but they sweetly draw the soul, by secret influence, into the love of God and into obedience to his will, while they communicate a satisfying sense of that love to the soul; and they are principally felt in the paths of duty, and in the means of his appointment, and are to be discerned by their holy and sanctifying tendency; for that which comes from God must lead to God. True religion, as it consists in faith, and love, and spiritual enjoyment in Christ Jesus, must be secret in the heart, or rather inwardly experimental. But its effects will certainly appear in the conduct; will transform the soul into the image of God, and incline it to cheerful obedience to his commands. This only is the work of the Holy Spirit, and all besides may be known to be a delusion, by its unsanctifying tendency, so directly contrary to the nature of that Spirit whose very name is holy.

Let the believer also beware of trusting too much to sensible manifestations and comforts; or to enlivening and rapturous frames. These may come from him, as gracious encouragements to animate the believer in an arduous duty, or a difficult warfare; and, as such, ought to be acknowledged with thankfulness, when they are attended with other evidences of a gracious disposition, in the love and fear of God. But let them not be considered as any peculiar evidence of his favour; lest, when they are withdrawn, the soul shall sink down into fear and despondency,

and mistake the withdrawal of sensible comfort for the withdrawal of covenant and fatherly love. Such frames are pleasant and desirable ; but, in the present state, our heavenly Father sees good, in general, to lead his people in a very different path ; to exercise their faith, to check their pride, to excite their diligence, and to prevent presumption and self-confidence, which are too apt to grow up in the sunshine of consolation ; and, that they may give diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.

Thus our invisible Redeemer, invisible to the world, invisible to sense, but really seen by the eye of faith, carries on the plan of salvation in the hearts of his people. By faith he is seen, and in a measure enjoyed, in all his excellency ; though his full glories shall never be perfectly comprehended,—no, not when he is viewed by the soul in the heavenly world, when all its powers are fully matured and exercised to their full extent in the contemplation. Still the highest powers of finite intelligence will be unable to comprehend infinity ; still an infinity of glory will leave the adoring soul contemplating at an infinite distance, and employ its immortal powers, without ceasing, through endless ages ; still leaving, in the search, an infinity yet to come. The effect, however, shall be glorious : for, as faith, now so imperfect in its discovery, does change the believer into the same image from grace to glory, &c. ; so, there we shall be, in a more eminent and perfect sense, like him ; when we, in a more perfect sense, see him as he is. It must now be evident, that this view of the person and glory of our Redeemer is not so unprofitable, as might at first sight appear. It confirms the doctrine of his essential Godhead ; it manifests him as one in the eternal Jehovah ; and thus unites with every other character of the Redeemer, in establishing the faith of his people. If he dwell in that light which no man hath seen, nor can see ; his glories must be infinite, his perfections those of the Godhead. Creatures may behold, and, in some measure, understand, the glory of the highest creature ; but never can they comprehend the infinite glories of the eternal Jehovah.

And while the Lord Jesus Christ is thus spoken of and represented by titles, and names, and descriptions which belong only to Jehovah, surely his glory must be the same, for he giveth not his glory unto another. This is the great distinguishing truth of Christianity, and the foundation of all its glories: it is the corner-stone of its system, and unites and secures the whole together. Without this, Christianity is an unconnected series of unintelligible doctrines; but this connects the whole together, and forms it into that glorious plan which is the wisdom and the power of God. The doctrine, therefore, is abundantly proved in Scripture; and we are confident, “that he is therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him;” that he must be almighty to redeem, and all-sufficient in grace and power, to save all his redeemed people.

But if he be the God invisible to us, let it be remembered, we are not invisible to him, who is Omnipresent, Omniscient, the all-seeing God. He is near, though unseen, and terrible to the sinner; but the refuge and defence of his people. He searches and knows us: he knoweth our down-sitting, and our up-rising, &c. (Psal. cxxxix. 1, &c.) O solemn consideration! Thou careless sinner, he knows thy heart, thy thoughts thy desires, the objects of thy pursuit, the motives and the end of all thy ways. When the darkness surrounds thee, when no eye is upon thee, when secrecy gives confidence to iniquity; there is He the great unseen above: he notices, and he notes down, the actions of thy rebellious heart. How then wilt thou bear his presence, when he is seen in all his glory, as far as that glory can be revealed to finite creatures? How will his terrors make thee afraid, and crush thee to destruction! See the Lord then by thee, and walk as seeing him who is invisible. His glories, O believer! are thy security, though unseen; for this glorious Lord is thy Redeemer. Returning and believing sinner, he notices the desires of thy heart, thy enemies, thy fears, thy groans, thy conflicts. Thou lookest round to behold him in the dark path of his providence, and of his spiritual dispensations;

and perhaps thou canst discern neither his hand nor his footsteps. But he knoweth thy path; and when he hath tried thee, thou shalt come forth as gold. (Job. xxiii. 8—10.) Let him then be the object of thy confidence and faith; and, at the same time, of thy admiration and love. On account of the invisible nature of his perfections, we are too apt to forget, both his person and his glories, though the consideration ought to heighten our adoring reverence, and demand our constant worship and dependence.

Infinitely removed in the glories of his person, the wisdom of his designs, and the motives of his works, from the view of mortals; yet angels worship him, for they behold his glory, and desire to look into the mystery of his ways, especially the great mystery of redemption. Let us, with them, admire and adore. We cannot yet see him; but his word makes the most delightful and endearing manifestations of his glory, which it is the business and work of faith to realize. What then can we do better, than to search those Scriptures which testify of him; that there we may learn more of him, and pray for increase of faith, spiritually to behold him, till we see him better, in our glorified bodies above, till we behold him as he is? Though we never can fully understand his glory, his person, his character and his work, in all their wisdom, power, grace, and love, yet to know more and more of him, is the best pursuit upon earth, and requires, as it will abundantly repay, our most serious and laborious attention. We never need fear exhausting the mighty theme; for its mysterious heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, will be the theme of meditation, wonder, and delight, unceasing, and undiminished, throughout eternity. Eternity will only unfold still growing wonders, still enlivening sources of admiration, love, and praise. How strange, thou blessed Jesus, that we can be content to think so lightly of thy glories, that we contemplate them with affections so cold and uninflamed; that we are so taken with the objects of sense, which perish in the using, and forget those infinite excellencies that are eternal in thee! Seen only by the eye

of faith, external objects thrust the unseen world still further from our view, and corrupt our affections, with an intrusive and unresisted power. Gracious Lord, increase our faith, that, constantly considering thy characters, perfections, and glory, we may learn to love thee more; that unbelief may give way to the lively, animating, sanctifying, and consoling exercises of faith; an earnest of beholding thee as thou art, of being like thee, and enjoying thee for ever!

ESSAY XIII.

Blessed AND Blessor.

THE titles which we are now about to consider, the **Blessed** and the **Blessor**, and which will be united, in our present consideration, belong with a peculiar propriety, according to the Divine plan of redemption, to our adorable Jesus. They are indeed the essential properties of Jehovah; and to upright creatures he appears in all their fulness, and is as such enjoyed by them; but to sinners he can never appear as such, as is evident by the revealed purposes of his grace, but through the Mediator, and as viewed in his glorious person. It is in him alone that men are blessed, and to be blessed; and him therefore they are to acknowledge as the **Blessed** and their **Blessor**. (Gen. xxii. 18; Psalm lxxii. 17.) The question is here answered, which man is continually asking, How shall I be made truly happy or blessed? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and obtain an interest in him. In him is all, not only that a creature, but that a sinner, can want; the curse is removed, the Divine favour restored; in him the all-sufficient God becomes the covenant God of his people, and all the power, wisdom, goodness, and grace, which are in him, stand engaged to secure and perpetuate their blessedness.

This two-fold character, then, *the Blessed and the Blessor*, as it peculiarly belongs to our Jesus, is wholly suited to the state and wants of sinners, and will, in its consideration, endear him to our hearts.

We consider him, then,

1. *As the Blessed, or the Blessed One, essentially the only Blessed.*—And this he can only be, as he is God, or one in the essence Jehovah, or the essential Godhead.

God must be blessed ; all his perfections, attributes, and glories, constitute him essentially so ; and, if our Jesus be God, and a person in the Godhead, he must be equally so ; and he cannot in any other sense be so, unless he be God. He is therefore called by the Apostle “ God over all, blessed for ever” (Rom. ix. 5) ; a character which is attributed to the Creator, or the Godhead essentially, in chap. i. 25 ; “ The Creator, who is blessed for ever ;” which also is given to the Father in 2 Cor. xi. 31. “ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore.” Thus again he is styled by the Apostle, in 1 Tim. vi. 15, “ The blessed and only Potentate.” The blessed God is the highest character of Jehovah, and it is the character of our Jesus. We shall not now enter further into the proof of his Divine personality ; but as the same names, attributes, perfections, works, and worship, are attributed to him in Scripture*, we shall see, if we inquire what it is which constitutes the Divine blessedness, that he possesses all that can render him worthy of the titles, as essentially *the Blessed One*.

The blessedness of Godhead consists in *self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency*. The first of these is expressed in the name Jehovah †, or the I AM, in which God revealed himself to Moses (Exod. iii.), and which our Lord claims to himself, for it is evident the Jews so understood the claim, when he said, “ Before Abraham was, I am.” (John viii. 58.) The other is the very name itself under which God revealed himself to Abraham : “ I am God Almighty ;” or rather, *God, all-sufficient* : “ Walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Gen. xvii. 1.) But he who is self-sufficient must be all-sufficient: imperfection is entirely owing to the want of wisdom and of power ; but infinite wisdom and almighty power must constitute absolute perfection.—The blessedness of Godhead may consist, still further, in unchangeable holiness of nature. Holiness in Deity may be considered as the perfect love of order ; and this, with the

* See the titles, *Jehovah, Aleim, &c.*

† See the title *Jehovah*, in vol. I.

power of maintaining and preserving that order, must constitute perfect felicity. In an inferior sense, the blessedness of the Godhead may be considered as connected with receiving all the blessings and praises of upright intelligent creatures. This however, as being out of himself, cannot be considered as adding any thing to the necessary and essential blessedness of a being, whose self-sufficiency must ever render him completely and unchangeably blessed in himself. And yet, we must conceive that the Lord will rejoice in his works. (Psa. civ. 31.) He who hath created the worlds unnumbered, and formed infinite intelligences as he saw best; who hath created all that tends to the felicity of his creatures; hath created them all, and still is creating them, for his own honour. (Col. i. 16; Rev. iv. 11.)

Millions of happy creatures, continually receiving from him, are continually praising him, and thus manifesting forth his glory, who in himself is essentially, and, in the glory which he thus receives, is supremely and eternally, blessed. In the contemplation of his own perfection, indeed, is the source of all his felicity, which is thus manifested around to all creation; in which sense, he that offereth praise, glorifieth the Lord. This is the glory of our Jesus, who, as God as well as man, and as Jehovah, must participate the unbounded glories of the Godhead. He is also in himself infinitely and essentially blessed, as Immanuel, in his person as the Mediator. Though once he appeared as the Man of Sorrows; though he condescended to submit to trials, temptations, afflictions, and to death; yet now he has taken that manhood into perfect and complete union with the Godhead, as the Son of God, to participate in all its glory, its fulness, and its honours. It is of this he speaks, when he prays, “Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was:” and when again he says, “Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee:” “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” “Father, I

will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 5, 21—24.)

Thus is he blessed in his human nature, as none other is, or can be, in union with the Divine nature. As true blessedness consists in perfect wisdom, to know what is good and best; in all-sufficient power and ability to accomplish every work, and in the complete enjoyment of every desire; He who partakes of the Divine wisdom and knowledge, who has all its power and sufficiency, and its full enjoyment of felicity, must be truly blessed. This is the glory and blessedness of our Jesus. But to us, as dependent creatures, there can be no other blessedness but a perfect conformity and submission to the will of God in Christ Jesus, arising from a perfect satisfaction, in the exertions of his infinite wisdom, and his almighty power; and in the ready communication out of his fulness to supply all our wants. In the fulness of his Divine power, he completed his victories, and all the work which he undertook in his humiliation for the redemption of his church; and in his exaltation, he has all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge; and all power for all the purposes which in his eternal counsel he designed, yea, all power in heaven and in earth, to fulfil all the objects of his mediation, till he see of the travail of his soul and be eternally satisfied. "Having therefore purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of God," in union with the eternal Godhead, he is "appointed heir of all things," being "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person;" and thus enjoying all the Divine glories, he must be essentially, perfectly, and eternally blessed in himself. Here we must admire, what we cannot comprehend, and never shall be able to comprehend throughout eternity, the ineffable union of the divine and human nature, in the person of Immanuel, like all the mystery of Godhead, uncomprehended, and for ever incomprehensible to finite creatures. But while as Mediator in the union of the Divine nature, he has all the power and sources of blessedness in himself; yet is all this not for himself, but

all his people are to be, and are, blessed in him. For this purpose he condescended; for this purpose he suffered; and for this purpose he was exalted. This makes him so precious, so suitable to us, as he is,

2. *The source of blessedness to his church; in whom alone sinful men are blessed.*—While blessedness is in him as its spring, dwelling in him as the Redeemer triumphant upon the throne of God, as the God-man and Mediator*; he thus becomes the source of all the blessedness which is conveyed to his redeemed people. This is the high character in which he has been held forth from the beginning; in and from the first promise, that he should bruise the serpent's head, or destroy the destroyer of man's purity and felicity. And ever since man forfeited and lost his true blessedness, by the rebellion of the first Adam, the only means of regaining it has been from, and by union with, the Second Adam, the Lord the Saviour. In every renewal, therefore, of the covenant of Grace, He is the grand object, through whom the blessing of Jehovah is promised, as the covenant God of his people; and this is especially the case in every repetition of that covenant to Abraham; increasing in clearness, till he is eminently marked out as that peculiar Seed of the believing Patriarch, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. (Compare Gen. xii. 3; xv. 1; xvii. 8; xxii. 17, 18.) To this promise, no doubt, the Psalmist alludes, when, predicting the glories of the Redeemer's kingdom, he closes the whole with a declaration of the universal blessedness which shall be experienced under it; that men, *i. e.* the race of men, “shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.” (Ps. lxxii. 17.) The Apostle Paul, in allusion to the very same promise, has given us a view of the nature of that blessedness which is to be enjoyed under his dominion, and the means by which it was obtained. The blessing of Abraham, he

* “Some of the songs terminate in himself, others flow through as from the head to the members, giving him the first relish of their sweetness.”—*Dr. Watts.*

tells us, is the great Gospel blessing, the promise of the Spirit through Jesus Christ; and that this blessing might come upon the Gentiles, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us; thus removing that which stands in the way of all true blessedness, and securing the bestowal of all the covenant grace according to the promise. This was the Gospel which was preached unto Abraham; and when God determined to justify the Gentiles through faith, he declared, “In thee shall all nations be blessed:” so that they which be of faith are blessed with faithful, or believing, Abraham, (compare Gal. iii. 13, 14, and 8, 9;) which can mean no less than that sinners, believing in Christ, thus become interested in him; and, through the merit of his death, are made free from every curse, and entitled to all the blessedness that is in him. Here the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, presents itself to our view, as the great and only means of deliverance and restoration to guilty sinners. The eternal Son of God, who, as God, is the fountain of all blessedness to all his upright creatures, undertook the work, and placed himself in a situation in which he was capable of becoming the fountain of blessedness to fallen creatures, that he might obtain it for them, reserve it in himself and treasure it up in an infinite fulness, that they might have all in and through him.—By taking upon himself human nature, as the Seed of Abraham, he entered into union with fallen creatures; became capable, as a brother, in that nature of espousing our cause, and acting in our stead; to remove the curse, by bearing it to the uttermost; in the power of his Divine nature to enter into the presence of God for us, and thus to secure the covenant blessings, in their fulness and everlasting sufficiency, to all the seed. It was for this, that he who “was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself and became of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; that, being found in fashion as a man, he might humble himself, and become

obedient to death, even the death of the cross:" and in consequence of this his humiliation he was highly exalted, as the object of dependence, worship, and adoration, to all in heaven and in earth. (Phil. ii. 6, &c.) As such he appears before the Throne as the Head over all things to the church; having all fulness treasured up in him, and all power in heaven and in earth, to give eternal life to as many as were given him. Having endured that death which God had pronounced accursed, that death which the Law required; which none but himself, in his own infinite person, could ever have endured to the uttermost, without sinking into eternal misery; he removed the sentence of death from his people, and becoming sin for us who knew no sin, we become the righteousness of God in him.

No creature could be blessed under the curse of God, under the sentence of the Law, or under the power or guilt of sin; but "blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" or, as the Apostle explains it, "unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." (Rom. iv. 6, 7.) That man only can be blessed, who is "justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses;" who has peace with God, who has access with confidence to the Throne of Grace; who is secure in the favour, and under the care, of a reconciled and a covenant God. There can, therefore, be no true blessedness for a sinner, but in Christ, who being the eternal source of all blessedness, as the blessed God; undertook to place himself in a situation in which he might be the Blessor of his people,—that ever-glorious Immanuel, who, by his condescension obtained all, and in his exaltation possesses and bestows all; who stands now between God and sinners, with all authority and power to supply the wants of his people. How can a sinner think himself happy in the neglect of him? Without Christ we are under sin and guilt, without hope and without God in the world: and can the world give happiness to a sinner under the wrath of God, by its pleasures, its riches, its enjoyments,

or its lusts? Alas! the attempt is vain! But, blessed Redeemer, we have all this in thee: he that believeth in thee is justified from all things, and “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. v. 1.) “Through him we have an access by one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. ii. 18); and in him there is no condemnation to the believing sinner. (Rom. viii. 1.) This Fountain of blessings hath removed the curse, the cause of all evil; and by union with himself, secures to his believing people, the enjoyment of every blessing in himself. As the Head of his people, he bears to them a sweet relation, and has pledged himself, in a covenant obligation, to communicate whatever is in him of glory and blessedness. “Blessed, then, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. i. 3, &c.) He is blessed, yea, most blessed, who is accepted of God, who has a throne of grace to come to always in every time of his need, who shall no more come into condemnation; who has infinite wisdom, power, and love, to manage his concerns, and who has an almighty arm to stay upon, in life and in death. He must be happy, who has a secure prospect beyond the grave; who, as an heir of God, looks forward with confidence to life eternal—to an exceeding great, an eternal, weight of glory. But this is the blessedness with which he blesses all his people: all things are theirs, life or death, things present or things to come; for they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. (1 Cor. iii. 21, &c.) They may take up the language of the Apostle, and say, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or

peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." They may entertain the confident persuasion, that "neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord." (Rom. viii. 33—39.)

Thus he blesses every believing sinner, not only by bestowing the blessings, but also by conveying them effectually, and eternally, and irrevocably, to the heart. Now, therefore, said the royal Psalmist, "Let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever." (1 Chron. xvii. 27.) His blessing "is the putting forth such a measure of power, as makes good the intent and declaration of his grace. Blessing, in the lowest sense, is the signification of good-will and hearty affection; but if not seconded with kind offices to the utmost of one's power, all good words are hardly allowed to be the indication of kind intentions. But wherein is the excellency of the Divine blessing, but in that Divine power which actually conveys the blessing: they whom he condescends to bless, are blessed indeed."—(*Riccaltoun*).

This is the great peculiarity of the covenant Blessor of his people. When he says, "Be thou blessed," it is no ineffectual wish, like the good wishes of men, which often fall short of the end: but he gives that virtue to every means that shall effectually promote the end; and, in his disposal of the concerns of his people, troubles, trials, afflictions, and temptations, have but one object and end; and under his direction they shall all promote that one end, to render his people blessed. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" All things must say, with the reluctant Prophet, "Behold, I have received a commandment to bless, and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it." (Numb. xxiii. 19, 20.) If then we know our true blessedness, we shall find that it ever consists in an absolute trust in him, con-

formity to his will, and submission to his disposal: and the perfect felicity of his people in glory will be the same,—a perfect conformity to him, and a perfect acquiescence in all the will of God, as the wisest, the best, the most suited to his own glory, and the circumstances of our state. Let us aim to grow in this believing trust and confidence; and so our felicity will increase on earth, in the enjoyment of his fulness: every thing around us, and every dispensation of his providence, as under his guidance, will be seen promoting our real good, coming as a covenant blessing, and attended with the tokens of his everlasting love, and covenant and unremitting care.

But the perfect blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as Mediator, consists in that union with, and nearness to, the Father, to which he is admitted upon the throne above: and it is his prayer that they also may be one, as he and the Father are one; that they may be one in them, viz. the Father and the Son. It is his will, as having completed the terms of the covenant, that the whole blessing of the covenant should be bestowed upon them; and that therefore they should be with him, to behold that glory which is given him, which will consummate their blessedness. Now they receive the partial and imperfect discovery and communication, in the exercises of faith; but hereafter the glorious vision, and the perfect enjoyment of God and the Lamb, shall be the perfection of their bliss.

From this view of the nature, the person, and the character of our Jesus, we must discern the great glory and blessedness which necessarily result from union with him. If he who is the Blessor, be thus blessed in himself, what can they want who are in him, who are partakers of his favour, who are interested in his love, whom he is determined to honour, and who are brought into the near relation to him, as the members of his body, by the grace of his Spirit and the exercise of faith! This is the Blessor to whom the Gospel points the poor perishing sinner, in all his guilt, and in all his fears and troubles; the Deliverer

from the curse, the Fountain of infinite fulness, wherein all fulness dwells. O believer! let thy faith, in the strong exercise of dependence and expectation, cleave closer to him, realizing his all-sufficiency; and, in thy weakness his strength shall be made perfect; in thy emptiness his fulness shall be displayed. Nothing can be needed to make a sinner happy in time, in death, or in eternity, which is not in the God-man, Immanuel, the Mediator between God and man, the appointed and accepted Saviour of sinners. It is as easy for him to give glory as to give grace; and “he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he deny to those who walk uprightly with him.” (Psa. lxxxiv. 11.) Jesus, be thou my friend, and in thee I shall receive again all which I lost in Adam; nay more, infinitely more, in an eternal union with thee, and an eternal enjoyment of thee, and of all the blessings of thy salvation. How important then the question, Am I a partaker of Christ? A sinner I certainly am, with all the consequences of sin upon me, and around me: and, if there be no true blessedness to a sinner, as there certainly is not without Christ, is he mine? am I found in Christ? is the most important subject of inquiry.

If I feel my need, if I discover myself as miserable and lost without him, this conviction is a favourable sign of the teaching of his grace; and, if it lead me to Christ with a desire of his salvation, to rest my soul upon him for it, it will be well in the end; because he promises, They that seek shall find, and to them that knock the door shall be opened; and because he has engaged not to cast out any that come to him, but to give them freely and fully of the waters of life, that they may drink abundantly, to their eternal satisfaction. But happy indeed am I, if I have found peace in believing; if my heart has thus been drawn to seek its blessedness in him, and thus to live and delight in him alone and supremely, and to be living by the faith of Jesus. Then shall the curse be removed from my soul, through Him who was made a curse for us; and upon my soul shall come the blessing of Abraham, the promise of

the Spirit through faith. (Gal. iii. 13, 14.) Then shall I be among the blessed number to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. (Rom. iv. 4, 5.) Then shall I be free from condemnation; and the death of Christ shall secure to me the infinite supply of eternal blessing, from the infinite fountain of the Mediator's fulness. It is not indeed a mere assent to the system of his doctrine, or to the plan of his salvation, which will secure this blessing; but the reliance of the heart, the faith of the heart, the true and living faith, which is the grace of his Spirit, which leads me to trust his promise, and disposes me, with a spiritual mind, to delight in and welcome his blessings, as the most suited to the disposition and affection of a renewed nature. Then shall Christ be mine, and all his blessings mine, throughout eternity. Then let us join, if partakers of his grace, "to call him Blessed," and to offer to him all our ascriptions of blessing and praise. Our calling him Blessed is indeed very different from his calling us so: for when he calls, he makes blessed; whereas, when we call, we can only express our sense of that blessedness that is already essentially his own. Let us, however, at least acknowledge that all our blessedness is in him, as the source and as the giver. The penitent sinner can have no hope of blessing but in and through him. If he be the propitiation, the atonement, the righteousness, the wisdom, the redemption of his people; and if all fulness be in him alone, then is it the first happiness of a sinner to be brought to see this, and the happiness of the believer to enjoy it. And one source of his felicity must always be, to give back the honour to the Redeemer, by the dependence of faith and the song of praise. This, it was predicted, should be the peculiar pleasure of his Gospel church: "Then," says the Prophet, "surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Isa. xlv. 24, 25.) Then "he who blesseth himself in the

earth, shall bless himself in the God of Truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of Truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." (Isa. lxxv. 16.) "Yea," says the Prophet (Jer. iv. 2), "the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." This is the very essence of faith, to rely on the Lord Jesus Christ for all which he is appointed to bestow; and the best honour which a poor sinner can give to him, as the Mediator and Saviour, is to look for pardon, justification, and peace with God, through his blood; and the best honour which the believer can give, is to realize, by constant faith, the all-sufficiency of his redeeming power and love—to make him all his salvation and all his desire, the Alpha and Omega of all his hope, his all in all. But when the believing sinner is convinced of this; when he thus trusts in him, and believes the promises of his word, he cannot but acknowledge that he is worthy of all blessing and praise. His own infinite blessedness renders him the glorious object of all adoration. The nature also of his mediatorial character and offices, which he assumed with a view to the salvation and glory of his people; his condescension, his suffering, his exaltation in that character—in all these he is most worthy of our praise; and in his obtaining and possessing all mediatorial fulness of blessing, he is the object of everlasting wonder and delight to his people. But in communicating all this blessedness to guilty sinners, he is infinitely and eternally "above all blessing and praise." Thus blessed in him, his people will bless him and give him the glory of all, throughout eternity. This is their disposition upon earth, and shall be perfectly so above, when the great Priest shall come out of the holy hill, to pronounce upon them his eternal blessing. These are views, indeed, which none but his people take, and views which render him so precious to them by believing. But are our hearts in unison with their songs of praise? All in heaven are joining in one enraptured song of glory to the Lamb; and none will ever come to that happy place, who

have not the disposition to join them. His people, delighting in his salvation, will ever delight to ascribe that salvation to him, and to bless his name for redeeming, calling, preserving, and saving them. This is not the disposition of the sinner, who is living and practically delighting in his sin: he cannot delight in that Saviour who came to save his people from their sins. Nor is it the disposition of the self-righteous, who, unwilling to be so indebted to a Saviour, can see no beauty nor glory in his person or his work. And why? but, because blinded by the god of this world, they cannot discern the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but every refuge of lies shall be swept away, that Christ may be all in all in salvation, and have all the glory. This was the confidence of the church from the beginning. Thus believing Abraham was justified; thus Moses accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt; thus the Apostle accounted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, &c.; and if our hearts do not concur with this, it is evident that something must be essentially wrong there. In his glory above, the angels of God worship him: on earth it is declared, that the kings of the earth shall bring presents and offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. (Ps. lxxii. 10, 11, 15.) In heaven, it is the harmonious employ of all: the thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, with a loud voice proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." The great multitude, which no man can number, who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," when they appear before the throne, will also with a loud voice proclaim, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."

What can his people expect from him, so infinitely blessed in himself, who has taken such means, and so condescended to be able to bless sinners, and place them

among his people, but all blessings which an infinite Blesser can bestow? What should we then render back, but all blessing to him? Let us do it as we can now: soon we shall do it better—more as we ought, but never as he deserves.

Blessed then be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious Name for ever. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.



E S S A Y S

ON

ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES

OF

CHRIST.

EIGHTH SERIES.

EIGHTH SERIES.

ESSAY I.

The Word of God — The Word of the Lord.

THE titles which we are now to consider are titles which are frequently applied to Messiah in the Old Testament, and decidedly to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New, by the term דבר, or the Word. The learned among the ancient Jews, in translating or explaining the Divine names, as they occurred in the Scripture, constantly referred several of them to the person of Messiah. But whenever the term, the Word of the Aleim, or the Word of Jehovah, occurred, (or, as it might rather be rendered, the Word, the Aleim, the Word Jehovah; that is, that person in Jehovah Aleim who is the Word,) they considered it as denoting the personal appearance of the second Person in the Godhead, and him whom they expected as their glorious Messiah. Such is the interpretation of their Targums, which evidently shews what were their expectations before their hatred of the true Messiah had perverted their minds, and their prejudices against the doctrines of Christianity determined them to explain away their own Scripture, and forsake their former methods of interpretation, rather than acknowledge Jesus as the Christ.

In the passage where the term first occurs in Scripture, it appears plainly to allude to some personal appearance, and not to any vocal sound: “After these things the Word of the Lord” (or the Word Jehovah) “came

unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (Gen. xv. 1.) And it is evidently the same person who in the next chapter appeared to Hagar, under the title of the Angel of Jehovah, and gave a promise to her similar to that which he had here given to Abram. (Compare xv. 4, 5, and xvi. 10: compare also 1 Sam. iii. 21.)

Such most probably is the design of the expression, Psa. xxxiii. 6, if compared with 2 Pet. iii. 5. and Ephes. iii. 9, where it is said "God created all things by Jesus Christ;" and Col. i. 15, 16, where it is affirmed, that "all things were created by him and for him." But in John i. 1, the term is directly applied to the incarnate Saviour, the Child of Bethlehem. He was the Word who was with God, and was God; the Word who was made flesh, and dwelt among us; whose glory was beheld as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. (ver. 14.) And near the close of revelation, it is under this name he makes himself known to his church, as the mighty Conqueror over all their enemies, as the King of kings and Lord of lords; yet being "clothed with a vesture dipt in blood," we cannot mistake his person, nor doubt but that it is the same who once died upon the cross, and is now exalted, with all power in heaven and in earth, for the salvation of his people. The term, as applied to Christ, may be considered as referring to three different but essential operations of the mind, with regard to speech. It may refer, 1. *To the word conceived in the mind*; or to the reason and wisdom of the mind, the cause of all external utterance. This is the peculiar meaning of the term λογος, used by St. John, which cannot be applied to the word spoken; but to the reason, or wisdom, speaking—the word considered as existing absolutely in the mind. In this view, Christ is the Word of Jehovah, as he is that person in the blessed Trinity in whom is all the wisdom and intelligence of Jehovah; the source and active spring of all its operation, in its external discoveries, and eminent acts. It may be considered as alluding, 2. *To the word spoken,*

which is the medium of all communication ;—or as, 3. *To the active cause and energy, accompanying what is spoken.* These, though different in use, are one and the same in the Divine mind ; and, as the term used by St. John (i. 1.) refers to the first, so to the two latter of these may be referred the description which is given in Rev. xix., of him whose name is called *The Word of God.* These three views together will embrace all the leading ideas included in the term. The first marks the place he holds essentially, in the Trinity of the Divine Persons ; and the others, his place as Mediator, or in the visible universal system of creating power. So, “ by his incarnation being pre-existent, and, as God, one in the Godhead, he is compared to silent thoughts resting in the mind, and in his incarnation to outward speech, whereby he reveals the Father to us.”—*Searle.*

From these general observations, it will be seen, that the term now under consideration holds forth the Lord Jesus Christ in a most sublime and glorious character, far beyond our comprehension. If men of reason and philosophy will endeavour to explain its mysterious import, no wonder that they are lost in the attempt, and only turn the subject into darkness ; for, if we cannot understand the essence, the nature, and secret operation of our own mind, how shall we expect to understand or to explain these things, as they belong to the Divine, the Infinite, and Eternal Mind ? The plain declaration of facts, as they are revealed, we may contemplate with advantage ; but the mode and manner of the Divine existence must ever be beyond the research of created intelligence, and require, not our ineffectual researches, but our faith and adoration.

Let us endeavour, with humility and caution, to state these facts, and follow the scriptural views of the glory of our Redeemer : here we shall find sufficient to admire, and much that is far beyond our finite comprehension.

1. In the Divine Mind, *He is as the Word conceived,* (the λογος) the Reason, the Wisdom, the Essence of all intelligence.—When we speak of the Godhead, we must

always be at a loss for terms ; and we endeavour to supply them by those which are used for the powers and exercises of our own minds.

Thus it is when the Lord Jesus Christ is compared to the word conceived ; *i. e.* the thought, the conception, resting in the mind, which may be considered as the word innate there, from whence our vocal words arise, and proceed to utterance and effect. This may be considered as the first and immediate product of the soul ; and yet as one with the soul ; for “ Nothing is more sure than that we do think ; nothing more in the dark than how we think. Who can declare the generation of thoughts in the soul ? Surely then the generation of the Eternal Mind must be the great mystery of godliness, the bottom of which we cannot fathom, while we adore the depths *.”

Thus the Son of God is the Word, the essential Wisdom, of the Father ; “ possessed of Jehovah in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (Prov. viii. 22) ; or, as described by John the Baptist, the only begotten Son, “ who is in the bosom of the Father.” (John i. 18.) This description is agreeable to the term : the Reason or Word conceived represents his intimate union in the Divine nature ; and this is an idea as near the reality as we can perhaps conceive it, for “ who can by searching find out God ? who can find out the Almighty to perfection ?” He therefore that bears this name is very properly described as King of kings and Lord of lords ; a character and dignity which belongs to Jehovah alone, who thus claims it for himself : “ Jehovah your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords.” (Deut. x. 17.) This, we apprehend, is the meaning of the term *λογος*, the Word. It surely marks him out as Jehovah : it designates his eternal Godhead, and yet his personality in that Godhead ; and both of these are expressly asserted by the Evangelist : “ the Word was with God, and was God.” This mystical union we cannot indeed understand or comprehend, much less can we explain it ; but we can believe upon the evidence of the Divine testimony, and reverently adore.—This personality

* Henry's Exposition.

in the Godhead we cannot but acknowledge upon scriptural authority; for, though the Lord Jesus Christ be Jehovah, possessed of all the attributes, perfections, and glory of Jehovah, which he gives not unto another, yet he is personally distinguished from the Father and the Holy Ghost; and spoken of in Scripture, under distinct personal characters and offices: so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Ghost either the Father or the Son; but “there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” We borrow the ideas from our feeble conception of our own spirits, to illustrate or explain; but none of these can fully elucidate the nature and existence of the Eternal Spirit: for by an incomprehensible union in the Divine essence, he is compared to the Word conceived; the reason, the intelligence, the thoughts, in the mind of man, as he is in the bosom of the Father, as he is the very mind of the Father; and therefore he is called, the Word Jehovah, the Word, the Aleim, the Word of God, or the Word of the Lord.

This sublime title of the Lord Jesus Christ does peculiarly belong to him, as in his mediatorial character, in relation,

2. *To the word spoken*; which is the indication of the mind, and the discovery of its internal conception.—“As words are the communication between man and man, and there can be no communication without the known signification of words; so Christ—being the thought, or the wisdom, or reason, or mind of the Godhead, substantially expressed in his incarnation—is the common connection and point of union between the corporal and spiritual, the visible and invisible, world.”—“The Word of the Lord, therefore, is not to be considered as a mere sound; but as the living Medium between the mind of Jehovah and the intellect of man.” (*Searle.*) It is correspondent with this view, that the Apostle speaks thus of his incarnation, that “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath

in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." (Heb. i. 1—3.) And he describes himself as being so truly one in the Divine nature, and such a visible manifestation of the Divine glories in his incarnation, that he is in the Father and the Father in him; so that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father. (John xiv. 9—11.) No doubt ever since he was set up from everlasting, ever since his going forth of old from everlasting in the mediatorial character, in the heavenly place, the glories of the Father, or of the invisible Godhead, have been discovered through the medium of his person; and in his person are made the most glorious discoveries of all the attributes, perfections, and excellencies of the Divine nature, in the holiness, purity, and perfect integrity of his character. In him we have the most complete manifestation of the glory of the Godhead, which can possibly be given us in our present state; and especially when now exalted upon the throne, he appears as the medium of all communication between the creatures of God, and the glorious Creator, whom no man hath seen nor can see. Hence we are told, that "no man hath seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed him" (John i. 18); for in his incarnation, "when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (ver. 14.) This is a most important sense in which he is styled the Word of God; but there is a view in which the name belongs to him, which is more generally understood, and which is indeed not less important, as in and by him Jehovah reveals to us his mind and will. The most remarkable appearances to his servants of old, whenever he would reveal to them his purposes and designs, or communicate to them the directions of Providence, were no doubt in the person of the Son, who is therefore sometimes called the Word of the Lord; and at

other times the Angel Jehovah. But the introduction of the Gospel dispensation was by that very person of the Godhead, in the actual assumption of our nature. Thus, as men discover their designs and intentions to each other by the means of words, so the Eternal Jehovah, has made known all his gracious designs to men by Christ Jesus; all the manifestations of himself in creation, in providence, and in redemption, and all the various revelations of his purposes and his good pleasure.

Now also, as the great medium of communication between a Holy God and his people, he stands before God for them, uniting in himself both natures, that he might be equally near to both; revealing all the grace and goodness of God to them; whatever God engages to do, or requires to be done; and whatever they need to supply their necessities: while he is (as we shall soon see more fully) the living Word, which gives life to his people, and conveys the knowledge of all spiritual blessings to the heart. What a glorious view of the Divine Redeemer! As thought and intelligence are in the soul, so is He one in the Divine Essence; and as the external word to the ear, so he reveals these attributes, and purposes, and determinations, of the Godhead, with the pleasure of his will, which without him had been for ever unseen and unknown to us. He is, as such, our true Prophet, who teaches nothing but truth; and the words which he hath spoken are faithful and true, and shall be found to be so through eternity. He spake of old by Prophets and righteous men, in predictions, prophecies, and promises: and when on earth in the likeness of our nature, He came to bear witness of the truth: He spake in the New Testament dispensation by Apostles, under the influence of his Spirit, and hath recorded all his declarations in the written word, which testifies only of the truth, and of him who is the Truth. Let us study this written word; for as it comes from him, whose name is called the "Word of God," we may say of it, what cannot be said of any thing besides, that it is truth unmixed with error. Whatever is there revealed of the nature and de-

signs of the Father ; whatever is declared of himself, or of ourselves ; all the views it presents to us, all its doctrines and declarations, all its threatenings and warnings, all its proclamations and precepts, are the words of faithfulness and truth. So also, for the consolation of the penitent sinner, and the doubting believer, are all its exceeding great and precious promises, however contrary to our deserts, or far beyond our expectations : the whole assemblage together contains only the faithful declaration of the mind and will, the purposes and designs of Jehovah. Thus of old he was represented, or typified by, or perhaps he himself was, the *לְבַר*, the oracle or *Word revealing* ; which is described with great precision, as : “ the voice from the mercy seat covering the ark, between the cherubim ; ” for all the revelations of Jehovah, all the manifestations of God, to creatures and sinners, all the intercourse between creatures and their God, are only in and from Christ Jesus, the true propitiation or mercy-seat. (Rom. iii. 25.) And these are made to his people, in perfect concurrence with the Father and the Holy Ghost ; of which union of the three in Jehovah, the cherubic figures were the typical representation. Let us come then to the Throne of Grace, looking to the Triune Jehovah, or covenant God in Christ Jesus, through the atonement and complete righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus ; and he will reveal to us the Father’s love and grace, and will speak the words of pardon, mercy, and salvation to the soul.—But,

3. The Word of God *must be power and effect* ;—and as such, we must consider it when applied to the second person in Jehovah. He has, or rather he is, the active cause and energy accompanying the word spoken ; as by him all things were created, and by him are carried on all the concerns of the universe. To speak and to do are the same with Jehovah : therefore He spake, and it was done. The work of creation, in all its parts, is represented as effected in this manner : and though carried on by a gradual process, the almighty fiat which brought into existence the different

parts, according to his own order, could with equal facility have created the whole by one almighty act. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. He said, Let there be light; and there was light. He said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters; and it was so. He said, Let the waters be gathered together; and it was so. He said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it was so: Let there be light in the firmament, and it was so," &c. (Gen. i. 1, 3, 6, 9, 14, &c.) The description perhaps is given us in this manner, in allusion to the character of Christ; that Word which is,

1. *The effective cause of all creation.* For as "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; so all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John i. 1—3.) Does there not appear to you a peculiar conformity between this declaration of the Evangelist and the original account of creation, in which all things are represented as coming into existence, by the all-creating fiat, or the Word of Jehovah? That this was the personal Word, or Christ Jesus, the Apostle has decided, when he says, that God created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. iii, 9): and again, (Col. i. 15, 16), "By him who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of (or born before, that is, set up in his economical or mediatorial character, before) every creature, were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him:" not only, therefore, this visible system of nature, but the invisible and spiritual intelligences which surround the throne above. How low, how mean, how degrading then are their ideas of the Lord Jesus Christ, who conceive of him even as the highest angel of Jehovah's presence; who is in fact the Creator of angels, and therefore *their Lord!* Who is that glorious person in Deity, by and through whom all the covenant

acts of Deity are performed;—all his acts *ab extra*, or without himself; or, all that do not begin and terminate in his own self-existence and self-satisfaction.

His word, his command, carries on all the designs of nature, and the works of Providence; and will do so, till he has “gathered in the elect,” and “till the mystery of God shall be finished.” The bright intelligences of the heavenly world are under his direction; the powers of nature in the material world obey his will; the spirits of men are under his influence and controul, and shall all accomplish his purpose, and fulfil the word of his power.

2. But as he was the Word of power and effect in creation, so is he the same *in the government and direction of all things*: “For by him all things consist.”—He alone is found able to open the book and unloose the seals of the Divine purposes in his providence; *i. e.* to unfold them by their execution.

3. He holds the same office, and displays the same power also *in the economy of redemption*.—Here, also, he is the All in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the Word of life, of power and effect; all is in and by the Lord Jesus Christ. He of God “is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.” The redemption which he obtained by his blood he will complete in its enjoyment by his wisdom, faithfulness, and almighty power, till all his “redeemed return and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” For this purpose he is the Word of God in the new creation; the Word of life, not only to reveal it, but to effect the redemption of his chosen. “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;” but this requires a power equal to the first creation: he himself, therefore, describes the efficacy of his word as quickening the soul: “The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” Spiritual death must yield when his voice goes forth; and his people are then “created

anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them." " Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." (John v. 25.)

It is evidently to the person of the Incarnate Word that the Apostle refers in Heb. iv. 12, 13 ; for he there speaks of him as a Person before whom all creatures are manifest, and all things naked and open ; who is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, able to cut off his people from their sins, and to cut down his enemies from before his people ; piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Compare Rev. xix. 15.) As he is the great Sum and Substance of the word of truth, the Scriptures, so in them he speaks to the heart of his people ; and it is by him, in the gift of his Spirit, that they become the power of God unto their salvation : and as he has revealed them, so he promises to attend them with his own almighty power, to render them effectual for the calling, edification, and salvation of his church. Thus he as truly creates as in the first creation ; as truly effects a spiritual creation as he at first effected the natural creation ; and gives a new life, with new principles, new faculties, new views, desires, and enjoyments : for, as " the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14) ; so the spiritual man is made such by the communication of the Spirit of Christ, and has received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that he may know the things which are freely given to us of God. (ver. 12.) When thus created anew in and by him, then by the secret word or power of his Divine teaching, by means of, and through, the outward word of the Scripture, and the preaching of his Gospel, he reveals still more and more of the Father in his glory, holiness, grace, and love, and thus divinely in-

structs the spiritual and regenerate mind, in the saving knowledge of Divine things, and spiritual blessings. Has he thus revealed the Father and his grace to us by the word of his power? He hath made the revelation in Scripture; and his providence hath brought those Scriptures of truth beneath our observation and attention. There this oracle of Truth has spoken to us the word of truth; but it is by the agency of his Spirit alone that this can spiritually enlighten the understanding, or affect and new-create the heart. It is by his Spirit's teaching alone that this word becomes precious: without this there can be no spiritual understanding of spiritual things; for the letter killeth, the Spirit only giveth life. Then, indeed, it becomes the word of life in the new creation, quickening from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, piercing the heart in conviction, in order to conversion and consolation, and renovating all the faculties of the soul in the image and the love of God. If this Divine power has attended his word to us, then have we learnt his glories by the discovery of his power; then do we value his word, which testifies of the Father, which bears witness of him and of the way of his salvation; then do we love and delight in him, and learn to trust in him alone for all supplies of grace and consolation; for as all life, grace, and comfort flow from him, we can only receive them as he becomes to us the Word of life, of power, and of effectual grace.

He never speaks in vain. Let us imitate this Word of Life, and never speak idly or without design; but that our speech may be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Let it, therefore, be of him; of his truth, of his grace, of his love, and of his ways; and it will administer grace to the hearers. Blessed Jesus, who art essentially the Word of God, let thy word be indeed spirit and life, to speak to me from God, to teach my understanding and my heart; fulfil thy character in the new creation and in the regeneration of my soul; and be thou to me, in every part of the great mystery of redemption, the word of power and effectual

energy for my salvation. Thus in the general resurrection he shall be manifested again as the Word of God, when his word alone shall quicken the dead, and bid them rise from the long confinement of the tomb. The voice of the mighty archangel shall awake the sleeping dust, and shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. (Psa. l. 1—6.)

Who this is, we are expressly told in these words: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 41—43.) But it is his own voice that shall give the quickening energy: "For the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 28, 29: compare 1 Thess. iv. 16. 2 Thess. i. 7.) Then, as the Word of the Lord, He shall determine the final judgment; and by his word the everlasting state of all mankind, and of fallen angels, shall be irrevocably determined; for, "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," &c. (John v. 21, 22.) And he hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man (ver. 27), and as such receives it mediatorially from the Father.

Soon, therefore, shall the Son of Man come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; and, sitting upon the throne of his glory, before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. (Matt. xxv. 31, 32.) Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (ver.

34); but to them on his left hand, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (ver. 41): and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. (ver. 46.)

How glorious the Saviour who has undertaken the salvation of his people, to whom they have fled, and in whom they trust,—the Word of God, the Word Jehovah; and as such, one with the Father in the glories of the Godhead! He, in and through whom all the manifestations of the Divine glory and perfections, purposes, and designs, are made known to all his creatures; He that spake the world into existence; who speaks, and it is done; the Word of Life and Power; He it is that spake life to them when dead in trespasses and sins; and still speaks to them in his word by his faithful promise, with that word which has almighty efficacy. “Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” He therefore rests their security upon his almighty power and faithfulness: “He gives them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.” (John x. 28.)

Realize, believer, in faith, the power and grace of thy Redeemer; and then, when looking upon his promise, thou mayest rest assured of its accomplishment. Come and plead it; for he is faithful and true, and is able to fulfil it. Lift up your heads, then, ye humble penitents; for the Word of his power secures the eternal life of all his people, from the pardon of sin, through grace, to eternal glory. The glorious description of the Apostle, when viewing him under this character, is well calculated to excite our faith and expectation. “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven

followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords.**" (Rev. xix. 11—16; xvii. 14.) Surely then he is the worthy object of all adoration! When all his works are summed up, then all shall be to his glory, all shall manifest his perfection, and shall glorify him throughout eternity. Creation shall praise him, and providence shall praise his word; but redemption will arise above all, and his redeemed people will find their everlasting delight and pleasure in ascribing to Him who loved us, and redeemed us unto God by his blood, *eternal honour and glory.*

May the Almighty God, and the word of his grace, which is able to build us up, give us this inheritance, among all them that are sanctified! (Acts xx. 32.)

ESSAY II.

Salvation.

WHEN we considered the Redeemer under the very important and comprehensive title, *Jesus*; including in it, as we then observed, the ideas of the Lord Jehovah, and the Saviour; we principally attended to his undertaking the work of salvation, referring to this character the nature and the fulness of the blessings of salvation which are in him. As under the character of the Redeemer, we are principally led to contemplate the great Mediator in obtaining and working out redemption; and, under the title Redemption, to contemplate the fulness of blessings which are in him; so, as *Jesus*, the Lord, the Saviour, though comprehending, in fact, all his offices, characters, and fulness, we are more immediately led to view him as taking our nature, offering his vicarious sacrifice and his infinite atonement, making an end of sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness, completing the conquest of his enemies, and then ascending to intercede for his people, and govern upon the throne the church and the world. And in the title *Salvation*, under which we are now to consider him, we more immediately view him as possessing all the blessings of salvation, to bestow freely and fully upon his people, till he accomplish all his designs of grace in their eternal enjoyment of all its blessings, in his presence for evermore. How glorious the view which thus opens to the faith of the believer! May the great witness for *Jesus* testify of him thus to our faith, that, beholding his suitableness and preciousness, we may adore and rejoice in him as all our salvation, and therefore all our desire.

It is the ground of consolation to the penitent sinner, and of triumph to the believer, that He who has obtained salvation for his people, has all the blessings of salvation treasured up in himself to bestow. Salvation is the deliverance from sin, in all its miseries; and restoration to the favour and likeness of God, in all its blessedness. Every different view of the subject is only a different part of these great designs. Sin first separated man from God, introduced the aversion and enmity into his heart, placed him in a state of wrath, and subjected him to misery temporal and eternal. To be delivered from sin must therefore be the first step in man's return to God; and the removal of its miserable consequences, the first step towards the enjoyment of true and spiritual felicity in God.

The Son of God was therefore manifested that he might take away our sin, and destroy the works of the devil; and, having completed these designs, He has official power and authority, and infinite grace and compassion, to save from all sin, and bestow all the fulness of gracious blessings, for the complete salvation of his people.

The state of man, as a sinner under the Law, is a state of guilt and condemnation; for "what the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) The first work of salvation, in its application to the sinner's heart, must, therefore, be a renewal from such a state under the Law, as guilty condemned sinners, into a state of grace, as justified from all things; a work so glorious and so great, that none but an Almighty Power could effect it; for this not only includes pardon and forgiveness, but also implies a state of justification and acceptance. Thus the Apostle considers it in Rom. v. 1, 2: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and have access into his grace, and stand therein, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and "therefore there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (chap. viii. 1.) How great, how im-

portant, how gracious a change is this, effected by the grace and power of him who is our Jesus and our salvation! This is,

1. *The first blessing of salvation* from the exalted Saviour.—When the guilty sinner feels the conviction of his guilt and danger, what clouds of darkness surround the mind! what fears and distressing apprehensions affect the spirit! Without the record of the Gospel, the sinner, convicted in his conscience, must for ever yield to despair. But here he is informed of the salvation that is obtained, and of the blessings of salvation, which are treasured up in the Redeemer.” “Sing, O ye heavens,” says the admiring Prophet, “for the Lord hath done it; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” (Isa. xlv. 23.) On this is founded the free, the reviving promise, “I have blotted out as a thick cloud thine iniquity, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.” (ver. 22.) This is the concurring testimony of the New Testament: “We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins” (Eph. i. 7); and “by his one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;” of which the Holy Ghost witnesses in the promise of the new covenant, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. x. 14—17.) In the days of his flesh, he had power upon earth to forgive sins, and pronounced, with the authority of a Divine person, “Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee;” and still we rejoice in him, “who forgiveth all our iniquities, and healeth all our diseases.” Come then, thou convicted humble penitent, wounded in thy conscience with the guilt, and distressed in thy soul through an apprehension of the danger, of thy sin; doubt not to find in Jesus, the salvation of his church, all that thy guilty and afflicted state can want. Faith will bring the enjoyment of the blessing, while it rests in confidence upon him for the bestowment of it. There is indeed salvation in no other; but in him there is salvation, and blessings without

measure and without end.—Let us contemplate another blessing of salvation, as it flows from the heart of the exalted Saviour ;—

2. *A deliverance from the bondage and captivity of sin and satan*, into a state in which the heart is reconciled to God, and conformed to him *in righteousness and true holiness*.

The Apostle speaks of this as a deliverance from the “powers of darkness, into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. i. 13) ; from the bondage of the first, into a state of willing obedience to the latter ; or, as expressed in another place, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. These expressions imply, together with a change of state, a change of disposition and of character: and a deliverance from that which, of all bondages, is the most oppressive and destructive,—of sin in the soul, and of satan over it. This is the fruit of our Redeemer’s victory, whereby he has secured and assured ours. “In the power of his triumph he ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” The first and chief of which is the gift of his Spirit, as the Spirit of power and grace, to subdue the hearts of his people to himself, and to subdue their enemies to them. Hence he is not only the righteousness, but the strength and the sanctification, of his people, that he may be their redemption. In his righteousness, accepted and justified, they stand without spot or blemish before the eyes of a holy God, and are in every respect, with regard to justification, “complete in him.” By the power and grace of his Spirit, the power and dominion of sin is broken, and the love of it subdued in their heart. Once it maintained a sovereign and willing dominion ; but though it still be there, it does not reign in their mortal bodies, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof. They give the glory of this important change to the Spirit and power of Jesus, which has effected it: and to Him they look, as directed in his word, as their Wisdom and their Strength, for disposition

and power to subdue the remainder of it from day to day. Enlightened to behold it in its guilt and pollution, its baseness and abomination, by him they are enabled to hate that in which they once delighted, and to love and delight in the law and commandment of God after the inward man. They were the servants of sin, but they are thus become the willing servants of the Lord, and obey from the heart the form of sound doctrine. (Rom. vi. 17.)

His Spirit quickens them when dead in trespasses and sins, and becomes to them the Spirit of life and power; and they are made willing in the day of his power. Oh, how sweet is the turning of the heart to Christ, when the sinner, distressed with sin, beholding his grace and mercy, melts with godly sorrow, and lies in willing submission at the foot of the Redeemer's throne. He writes his law in their hearts, and engraves it in their inward parts, according to his new covenant promise. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) Then his Spirit leads them to the exercise of faith, whereby his glories are discerned, the freeness of his salvation believed, and the fulness of it received. He carries on his work, and stands engaged to do it from day to day, that he may lose none: and he who is the author, becomes the finisher, of their faith; while they live by the faith of the Son of God. Sometimes they are ready to fear they shall again be overcome; the body of sin revives and brings them into unwilling captivity; they lament with an Apostle that they are, as in themselves and in the flesh, still carnal, sold under sin; they find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members. But Jesus can subdue the strongest corruption; and he has promised that sin shall not have dominion over them, because they are not under the law but under grace. The power, the strength, is his by which they must conquer: to Him therefore they still look for its supply, nor shall they look in vain. Hitherto they have triumphed in him, and still shall do the same in his strength; and therefore they confidently boast in the Lord, "Surely in the Lord Jehovah

we have righteousness and strength." The powers of darkness still assault them, but the powers of darkness are conquered foes ; for He spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them upon the cross. And though, they are compelled to maintain the fight against powers and principalities, and the ruler of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, it is the fight of faith ; and, taking the whole armour of God, in it they shall conquer: for though their enemies are many and strong, their Redeemer is mighty.

Afflicted, tried, tempted, and sometimes apparently deserted, He will not forsake his work and office : He will still be their Salvation in all. Neither sins, nor enemies, shall overcome, or destroy them. They are weak, and are soon overcome ; they are insufficient, and would soon be destroyed ; but as in him, and under his constant protection, they may, with the Apostle, " Glory in their infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon them ; and when weak, then are they strong." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Thus they are now actually saved, and in part delivered from the love and dominion of sin ; and while the source of all grace is in him, it shall be communicated from him, and brought really into the experience of his believing people. Amidst trials and temptations, when ready to fall, when standing on the verge of danger, in the very crisis of difficulty, how often has he displayed his gracious and providential care over his people, broken the fowler's snare, plucked their feet out of the net, enlarged their path, and led them again in the way everlasting ! They are often ready to despair, and might well despair of victory in themselves ; but the promise, " The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," as much secures their victory as it secured his ; and the actual victory which he has obtained is the pledge and security of his and their eternal victory ; and their triumph together over all, in the kingdom of their Father. The daily deliverance and victory he bestows is a continuation of that pledge to them ; and the sweetest earnest in their own experience of its final and eternal

engagement. He is their Salvation from every enemy now; and the pledge of their Salvation in eternal triumph above.

Let us contemplate another blessing of Salvation in the hand of Jesus;—

3. The deliverance from the gloomy fears of guilt, exchanged *for peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost.*—Sin is the cause of all trouble; and while under the power of it in the heart, or the guilt of it in the conscience, there can be no true ground of peace or joy. The pleasure of the sinner is either the laughter of folly, or the joy of a delirium: it is transient as the crackling of the blazing thorns, and deceitful as the flaming meteor, which deludes the anxious traveller. But when the penitent flies to Jesus, when the believing sinner trusts his soul and his salvation in his hands, he takes the only ground on which he can stand with security, the only ground of peace; for “being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Hence the fruit of holy quietness and serenity springs up in the heart; and, when faith is in lively exercise upon the person of the Redeemer, and the manifold and eternal blessings which he treasures up for his people, a joy arises beyond all the joys of sense, unspeakable and full of glory. “Let him take hold of my strength,” says the Eternal Jehovah, “that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.” (Isa. xxvii. 5.) Hence the Prophet describes the church as exulting in the security of the Redeemer’s love and care: “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city: Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever.” (xxvi. 1—4.) Therefore, O Lord, “thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.” (ver. 12.) The right to this is laid securely in the atonement and complete redemption of the

cross; and in the triumph and eternal dominion of the Throne, the believing sinner has the privilege of entering into it, secured by the promises of the word. If faith however, be not in exercise, the enjoyment may fail, even where the title is indisputable; but when by his Spirit's secret voice of love, he speaks in consolation to the heart, the fears of guilt are removed, the clouds of darkness fly before him, the bright day of light and peace shines upon the soul, and the splendour of the Sun of Righteousness puts to flight the shades of guilt and sin. When he giveth peace, who then can give trouble? "O thou that dwellest in the gardens! thy companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it." (Song viii. 13.) Thy voice can quiet the fears of an afflicted conscience; and with the sense of pardoning mercy, conveyed effectually into the heart, can change the terrors of guilt, to the confidence of peace and joy.—This blessing is no doubt founded upon another;

4. *The privilege of adoption.*—"For we have received," says the Apostle, "not the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 14—16.) Adoption is the sovereign act of infinite and eternal Love; and the spirit of adoption is the consequent gift of the once suffering but now exalted Redeemer: "To as many as receive him, to them he gives the privilege to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on his name." (John i. 12.) The Apostle bore testimony to the same glorious benefit, as received by faith; "Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26): and he tells the Ephesians (ii. 13—19), that "in Christ Jesus they who some time were afar off, were brought nigh by the blood of Christ;" that through him, and from him, they had heard the tidings of peace; that through him they had access by one Spirit unto the Father, and from strangers and foreigners were become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.—O inestimable benefit! the blessings included in this change of state and relation are beyond conception! For sinners to become the children

of the Most High ; creatures on earth, once rebels and condemned, to become the children of the Eternal Jehovah ; to be put by him amongst his own family, to whom he will bear the relation and the love of a father ; to be one with Christ his only begotten Son, to claim him as their elder brother, and be by him brought into the privilege of his family ; and to have every duty enforced upon them, only by the consideration of their being his “ dear children ;” how far beyond the greatest expectation,—how far beyond the possible calculation, of guilty sinners ! To have an earthly father, who is great and glorious, opulent, and powerful, is one of the highest privileges on earth, and secures the highest honour and happiness to a beloved child : what then may not be expected from our Father which is in heaven ? “ If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to those that ask him !” What a dignity is put upon a redeemed sinner ! The God of heaven is his Father and his Friend ; the glorious high Throne from the beginning, is his refuge and his sanctuary ; the Throne of Grace is ever open to his prayers ; the ear of Infinite Wisdom delights to hear his supplications and his praises ; and his addresses to the Majesty on high are encouraged, emboldened, and sweetened, by the title in which he is commanded to introduce them—“ Our Father, which art in heaven.”

5. But as in him all fulness dwells, as he is the Head and Root, the All in All to his people, *from him they receive all spiritual blessings.*—The Apostle, therefore, opens his Epistle to the Ephesians with this language of grateful praise, “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ;” treasured up in him, that his people might be blessed with them, when brought from a state of guilt into his favour ; when delivered from the bondage of sin and satan, renewed in the spirit of their minds, and transplanted into the kingdom of God’s dear Son ; when delivered from the spirit of bondage, and of fear, and

brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. His love secures to them all the blessings of grace by the way; all that is needful to sustain, to comfort, to complete his mercies, or their renewed desires and expectations. Without Christ, the Apostle declares that a sinner is without hope: none but He could obtain salvation; none but He can apply it, bestow its blessings, or complete it in the heart. Whatever the sinner depends on besides, will most certainly fail him: when judgment is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, the refuge of lies will be swept away, with those who have rested on it, to everlasting destruction. (Isa. xxviii. 16, 17.) We must not give the glory of salvation, in any of its steps, to any one, or to any thing besides: there is salvation in no other, neither is there any "other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." If the convicted sinner looks at his repentance, his amendment, his works of righteousness, or even his faith, it will discover itself to be totally insufficient, as the saviour of the soul: but let him come to Jesus, and he will in no wise cast him out. Let him look at Jesus: almighty power, infinite wisdom, tender compassion, unite to encourage his expectation and his hope; an infinite atonement secures his pardon, and infinite righteousness secures his justification; faithful promises secure his acceptance, and unchanging and unchangeable faithfulness is the stability of his confidence. "Look unto me," says he, "and be ye saved:" and again, "He that believeth shall be saved." The believer is encouraged continually and renewedly to come to him, with every sin, in every apprehension of guilt and danger, with every need and every enemy, assuring himself that his grace is sufficient, his love most faithful, his salvation most certain. This is the business of faith: the work of faith in the daily exercises of the Christian life, bringing all to Christ, deriving all grace and all necessary supply from him, that his salvation may be daily experienced, in all the fulness of all spiritual blessings. (Psal. lxxxiv. 11.) But not only does the Salvation of Israel bestow all spiritual

blessings on his people, but, what must be considered still more glorious and divine, in his mercy and his truth he turns all things into blessing to them. Even the present consequences of their sinful state, in earthly and temporal misery, are regulated by his wisdom and love, so as to become the means of spiritual profit. Not that his people are here without affliction; for their “afflictions are many; they pass through great tribulation:” but still the promise is faithful, that “no evil shall happen to them;” for these afflictions and troubles are divested of all that is evil in them, by his almighty power and grace. In his providence, by a divine alchymy, he extracts whatever of the curse might otherwise be in them, and changes them into the blessings of his love; and while he supports under them, and sanctifies them to his saints, he not only turns them into good, but secures a glorious, a profitable, issue; to praise and honour and glory, at his own appearing. For when he gives the spirit of adoption, and inserts them among his children, he not only gives all spiritual blessings here, but also,

6. *The title to the children's inheritance hereafter;* for, “if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. viii. 17, &c.) Then, “according to his abundant mercy, he begetteth them to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” (See 1 Pet. i. 3—8.)—This is, indeed, in the highest, in the fullest sense, salvation. There will the exalted Redeemer complete his work, and complete their enjoyment of its several blessings. The pardon and justification of a believing sinner is indeed now complete: he is accepted in the beloved; but here clouds of sin and darkness often obstruct his view and consciousness of it; whereas there it shall be for ever enjoyed, without a cloud of guilt or fear to intercept its brightest glory. Then sin and guilt, and fear and sorrow, shall be no more: then shall every enemy be cast at the feet of

his redeemed; and when the last enemy shall be destroyed, which is death, the perfect knowledge of the Divine Majesty, in the glory of his harmonizing perfections, the perfect conformity to the Divine image, and the perfect enjoyment of the Divine presence, shall constitute the bliss of the heavenly world. A nature perfected in its highest powers and capacities, delivered from all the humiliations which sin has introduced into it, and placed in a situation surrounded with enjoyment suited to its high and exalted powers, shall afford complete, unceasing, and eternal felicity. These indeed are blessings which can never be fully known till they are fully enjoyed: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. ii. 9.) Well might the Apostle exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

This is salvation; a salvation which Jesus, as bearing the character now under consideration, has obtained right and authority to bestow upon all his people. That it is in him, is sufficient to excite our admiration; but that it is in him to bestow, and that he has the authority to bestow it, is the only ground of our consolation and joy. This authority he has obtained, in his mediatorial person, by the completeness of his mediatorial work. The covenant engagement is thus represented by the Prophet, through the astonishing suffering of his condescension; "He shall sprinkle many nations." (Isa. lii. 15.) "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my Righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their

iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isa. liii. 10—12.)

It was the consciousness of this that made him cry aloud upon the cross, before he bowed his head in death, "It is finished!" the work of atonement and propitiation, the work of satisfaction to Divine justice, the work of humiliation, suffering, and sorrow is now finished. In consequence of this, he received the proof of his acceptance, both as to his person and his work, in his resurrection; that he might prolong his days and see his seed. And from the region of the dead he ascended to possess the throne, to receive the reward of his work; *i. e.* the salvation of all his redeemed. In the view of this he triumphed, confident of success, though previous to the actual performance of his work, in his last public prayer upon earth; asserting, that his Father had given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as were given him. (John xvii. 2.) Of this he assured his disciples again after his resurrection, and just before his ascension, as an encouragement to their engaging in his cause before the world: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.)

View him then, O believer, with the eye of faith, as they afterwards viewed him with the eye of sense, ascending on high, "leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts to give unto men; exalted far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; with all things under his feet, as the Head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Ps. lxxviii. 18;

Eph. i. 21—23.) If then all these blessings of salvation are in his hands, hence he has obtained, by the right of the promise of the covenant of redeeming love, the terms of which he has amply fulfilled, and which is ratified in his blood, the authority to bestow these blessings upon his people. The right which he has obtained he stands engaged to exercise, in all the offices which he sustains, and by the very exaltation to which he is raised. Can we then conceive any thing more secure than the blessings of redemption in the hand of Him who has fulfilled all the conditions of redemption upon the cross, and received them in his resurrection and glory for his people? Surely He who loved his church, and gave himself for it; who loved us when sinners under guilt, even unto death; will never deny those blessings to sinners who come to, and believe in, him. He who has power and authority, must have grace and compassion all-sufficient. The salvation of Christ Jesus must then be sure to all his people: obtained by him, all the blessings of grace are treasured up in him, dependent only upon his unchanging love and almighty power. All that was necessary has been done by him, and all that is still necessary he stands engaged to do: so that “if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. v. 10.) Shall he not then save his redeemed through all, and notwithstanding all, opposition and enemies? Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, for opening a way through his condescension, his atoning cross and passion. Glory be to him who has all treasured up in himself; and blessings eternal on his head who promises never to cast out any who come to him,—who ensures eternal life to all who believe in him! This is the publication of the Gospel, the unfailing tenor of its declarations and promises: our great concern is to procure an interest in him, and thus to secure the blessing. It is a consideration which ought seriously to affect our heart, if, when there is such a Saviour, you and I, reader, should not be saved. Let it then be remembered, that

the experience of his grace on earth, in regeneration and sanctification of heart, is the first step in the actual bestowment of salvation; and without this, we can have no evidence of our interest in it. But while looking to him for salvation, in the exercise of a renewed spirit, let the humble penitent confide in his grace and truth; and through all the trials and afflictions of the spiritual life, let the believer trust his fulness, faithfulness, and care, and wait in full confidence of the full glories of his salvation.

This world is a scene of affliction, trial, and of death. All its amusements, its honours, and its glories, are but vanity and emptiness. But the life of the believer is a hidden life, hid with Christ in God. Keep your eye upon its glorious issue, O believer! for it is life and immortality; and soon shall you be there—soon all your fears and sorrows shall be for ever done away, and your hopes completed in the presence and glory of him who is the Lord our salvation. Let the song of praise now rise in faith before his throne, till it rise amidst the number of his redeemed around his throne above. Shout by the way, “Behold, God is my Salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my Salvation.” (Isa. xii. 2.) This song may well cheer the dreary waste of the wilderness: this will animate in every conflict, and satisfy in every situation, till the blessings of salvation burst forth from the throne above, in their infinite radiance, to crown the faith and hope of redeemed sinners, in all their glory and felicity, through eternal ages. Then shall the heavenly choir resound with united harmony, singing, with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Hallelujah! Amen.

ESSAY III.

Horn of Salvation.

THIS is the character in which the blessed Redeemer was saluted, when about to enter this lower world, in the prophetic song of Zacharias;—a character which was the glorious expectation of the Old-Testament church, but in which he appears more eminently revealed to the faith of his people under the New-Testament dispensation, and in Gospel times. The term Jesus, or Saviour, comprehends in it all the glory, grace, and blessings of salvation; and under it we principally consider his undertaking, or the work he performed to obtain this salvation. The term Salvation itself, under which he is frequently spoken, implies not only that he has obtained the blessings of salvation, but also that they are all treasured up in him; and leads us to consider the fulness and all-sufficiency of the Saviour's character and grace: but the phrase, *Horn of Salvation*, is still more comprehensive, and implies his dignity and glory, and his almighty power and ability to bestow the blessings of salvation, and to bring his people triumphant over every enemy, to the full enjoyment of them in glory.

The horn is an emblem of regal glory, dominion, and power; and in Scripture the power of different governments is represented by a horn, or by a number of horns. (Dan. vii. viii.) The regal dignity of the Redeemer we shall not now consider, because this will require a separate consideration; but we shall contemplate him who came to save sinners as glorious in majesty and power, and as able to save unto the uttermost: not only the Saviour and the Salvation, but the mighty Horn of Sal-

vation to his people ; securing the confidence, the joy, and the triumph of every individual of them, while leading them through all their enemies and dangers to the inheritance of glory.

We contemplate here the glorious majesty and dignity of the Saviour, in his person and office. The elevation to a place of dignity and honour is represented by exalting the horn (1 Sam. ii. 1) ; pride and self-exaltation is represented by lifting up the horn on high (Psa. lxxv. 4) ; and dishonour is represented by rolling it in the dust. (Job xvi. 15.) Hence it is said of Messiah, He will exalt the horn of his anointed, in reference to his elevation to the throne of eternal majesty and glory. If we inquire as to his essential glories, he is the Lord Jehovah, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father : as such, in the expressive language of the Apostle, we know he was rich (2 Cor. viii. 9) ; rich in all the names, attributes, works, and worship of Jehovah : as such, he was also the great Creator of all things, and by him all things consist. As Immanuel, he is God with us, God in our nature ; who, though he humbled himself and became of no reputation, yet, being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, who, though he was the Child born, and the Son given, is also the Mighty God. (Isa. ix. 6.) He must be acknowledged, then, by all his people, “ as the Great God our Saviour ; ” and, as such, must receive the worship and adoration of all his saints, as he does of all the angelic host ; but in his mediatorial character and office, in consequence of his condescension and completing the work of redemption, his human nature, as united with the Divine, is exalted to the participation of its dignity and glory. Him who hung and died upon the cross hath God exalted with his own right hand, as the Prince and the Saviour, to “ give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins ” (Acts v. 31) : and as the first born from the dead, “ in all things he hath the pre-eminence.” (Col. i. 18.) Not only is he glorious, but “ He is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express

image of his person." (Heb. i. 3.) Not only is he wise, but "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3.) Not only is he honourable, but "all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23); because for his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 9—11.) What horn of glory can ever equal the glories of our Redeemer? The honour of the Prophet, of the Priest, and of the King, are not only found singly, but unitedly, in him. Who can tell the glory of this Divine Saviour?

"What sons of men, or angels, dare
With his exalted rank compare?"

"Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty, thou glorious One, thou Majesty, in thy Majesty ride prosperously" (Psal. xlv. 2—4.) "Yea, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." If God hath thus exalted our Redeemer, let us exalt him in our views, and in our praises. "Blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever: let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen." (Psal. lxxii. 19.)—As the Horn of Salvation, we contemplate him in his exaltation and victory over his and our enemies, in completing the work of salvation. The power of any horned beast is placed in its horns; and, therefore, the horn is always considered as an emblem of strength and might. And the strength of a great kingdom is represented by an animal thrusting on all sides, and throwing down all before it. Thus it is said of Joseph, referring to the glory and strength of the ten

thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh; “His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth.” (Deut. xxxiii. 17.) And the destruction of Moab is represented by his horn being cut off. (Jer. xlviii. 25.) In Dan. vii. and viii. the mighty horns of power which had obtained the most universal dominion, are also represented as pushing and prevailing one after another, and casting down each other in succession; but the mighty power and strength of our Redeemer shall subdue and break them all, and, on the ruin of every foe, establish his universal and eternal kingdom.

From the view we have already taken of his essential dignity, and his mediatorial exaltation, we cannot doubt of his ability to perform whatever his everlasting love purposes, or his unsearchable wisdom devises. What arm can be equal to his? What design beyond his ability to accomplish? Well may it be said, Our help is laid upon the mighty One; yea, the Almighty, before whom all difficulties are equal, because no difficulties are insuperable. “Who would set the briers and thorns,” says the conquering Redeemer, in derision of the fury of his enemies—“who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together.” (Isa. xxvii. 4.) And since he has engaged to deliver his people, therefore, says the Prophet, “strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees: say to them that are fearful, Be strong, fear not: behold your God (Immanuel, God with us,) will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you.” (Isa. xxxv. 3, 4.) What are the difficulties in the way of salvation to guilty sinners, which his strength cannot meet, sustain, and remove? Is the law to be honoured and obeyed? Are its penalties to be endured? Is the weight of Divine wrath to be sustained in all its fury? Is justice to be satisfied in all its demands? Are the powers, principalities, and the rulers of the darkness of this world to be overcome? Are rebels to be brought down, and either destroyed by his

mighty power, or inclined to humble submission and obedience? Lo! I come, says the mighty Saviour: my heart is fixed: it delights in the glorious undertaking. My arm shall complete its various parts: my love shall endure to the end, despising all the indignity and the difficulty by the way, till I become the Horn of Salvation for my people.

Behold him, ye humble saints, to whom you commit the keeping of your soul; in whom you trust as the God of your salvation; behold him when first he goes forth to conquer. By the power of his Spirit, he comes forth into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; but in every attempt he foils the malice, overcomes the power, and averts the subtilty of the grand foe. Again, when about to accomplish his final victory, he set his face to go to Jerusalem, knowing that that was the hour of his enemy, and of the power of darkness; and in the agony of the garden he sustained the bitterest suffering of Divine wrath, where the sword awoke against the man who was Jehovah's fellow. Then upon the cross he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on it: there he endured the chastisement of our peace, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. He died as under the curse of sin for us; but even then he fulfilled the prophetic language in which he had long before anticipated his triumph: "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." And "by death he conquered him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." But behold, the Mighty Conqueror rises! He leads captivity captive: He claims admission to the heavenly mansions: He takes his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and, seated on the eternal throne, all his enemies are made his footstool.

Here is indeed a glorious Saviour, suited in his ability, in his actual work and exalted dignity, to the situation and the wants of sinners. Though he appeared in human nature, in all its weakness, infirmities, and degradations;

in all things like unto his brethren, a partaker of flesh and blood : this was only his voluntary condescension, because it was necessary in that nature to obey, to suffer, and to die ; “ For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our Salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Heb. ii. 10, 14, 17.) But in his complete mediatorial person he was as truly God ; Immanuel, God with us ; that he might atone, give merit and efficacy to his death, that he might work out a meritorious righteousness to be imputed to his people, and that he might be able to overcome death, and all the host of his foes.

He tells us now, “ It is finished ;” the price is paid, the ransom is given, the atonement is made, the righteousness is complete, the victory is obtained ; and gives us the assurance of the whole, in his resurrection from the dead. Therefore lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and let the mighty Saviour, the mighty Conqueror, enter in. He comes from the land of his enemies, glorious in his apparel ; his garments dyed with blood ; because he has trodden the wine-press alone ; in his righteousness hath completed all his engagements, and is now mighty to save. As the Horn of Salvation, he has received all power in heaven and in earth, that he may give eternal life to as many as were given him, and therefore he has almighty power to bring this salvation into the heart of all his people. For effecting this, the exertion of almighty power is as necessary as for the work of redemption, and the procuring of its blessings. To change the bias of the natural heart, which is enmity against God ; to subdue the stubborn will ; to triumph over the power of natural depravity and enmity in the soul ; to bring down the heart of a rebel, and turn it into obedience to himself ; —these are the mighty works of God the Holy Ghost, and none but that Almighty Spirit of Jesus can effect the change. It is a work of new-creation, a regeneration, a resurrection, a gift of a new heart, and taking away the old. What but the Spirit of the Lord can work such works

as these? They are, therefore, spoken of as the effect of his exaltation to his throne, and his receiving the power and sceptre of the kingdom. Then sitting on the right hand of the Father, his enemies become his footstool; the rod of his strength goes forth out of Sion; and, ruling in the midst of his enemies, by the grace and power of his Spirit, his people become willing in the day of his power. (Psa. cx. 1—4.) He who hath obtained, will apply, and it is his work alone to apply the power of salvation to the heart. Whether the heart be broken with terrors like those of the jailor, or opened like the heart of Lydia; whether the thunder of his power rends the mount, and breaks in pieces the rock before the Lord; or the still small voice of mercy sweetly inclines the soul; it is the effectual energy of his grace which changes the heart, and brings it from the dominion of satan, to a willing submission to himself. But his almighty power is equal to the undertaking; and, therefore, when the dead hear his voice, they that hear do live. (John v. 25.) And all that the Father hath given to him, do come to him. (vi. 37.) With an infinite fulness of blessings he supplies all their need through life; and from the first pardon of sin, to the kingdom of glory, as in him all fulness dwells, his grace and power supplies their necessities, and secures them from danger. This, however, properly belongs to the title of *the Saviour*, or *Salvation*, in which it has received a fuller consideration. We are, therefore, now only to contemplate this Horn of our Salvation, in that almighty power which he possesses, and which he exerts to complete the actual, the full, and the eternal enjoyment of his salvation, by all his redeemed people. When he brings his people to himself by his grace now, he gives the present blessings as the effect of his everlasting love, the proofs of present favour, and the pledges of eternal glory. There he has promised to bring all his people. For this purpose he endured their curse; for this he rose again from the dead; for this he is exalted, and bears their nature, interceding before the throne: and for this the universal

government is committed into his hands upon the throne above for ever.

As the power of his arm is equal to the love of his heart, He who hath borne their sin, will assuredly deliver them from the curse of sin; He who hath obtained eternal redemption for his people, will assuredly bring them to the enjoyment of its blessings; and, He who hath conquered all their enemies, will never suffer those enemies to hurt, to overcome, nor finally to destroy any of his redeemed. His work, his character, his offices, and his ability to perform them are the security of his people. He came down from heaven to do the will of his Father: and this is the will of the Father, that of all which he hath given to him he should lose none; and that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life: He therefore stands engaged to raise him up to the enjoyment of it, at the last day. (John vi. 38—40.) They may be tempted, tried, afflicted, and deserted for a time; but though perplexed, they are not in despair; though persecuted, they are never forsaken; though cast down, they are not destroyed. In the views of faith, of things unseen, they faint not: their outward man may perish, but the inward man is renewed day by day; and their light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (See 2 Cor. iv. 8 to the end.) In describing the path of the redeemed through life to glory, the Prophet asserts, that “no lion shall be there; neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon: it shall not be found there when the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there; till the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Sion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah xxxv. 9, 10.) The roaring lion may come near the path to terrify, but shall never enter it to destroy the heavenly pilgrim; for their security is, that “He shall be with them” in the way, “who hath the lion in his chain, and controuls and checks him at his pleasure.” (*Marg. Reading*, ver. 8.)

What other security could you have, O believer, against foes without and fears within ; those enemies which appear to beset and surround your path ? But if asking, as weak faith often will—or if saying in thine heart, These enemies are too mighty for me—how shall I overcome them ? he points thee to his own almighty power, as thy promised defence and protection : “ Thou shalt not be affrighted at them, for the Lord thy God will be with thee ; a mighty God, and terrible : and he will cast out those nations before thee by little and little ; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the Lord thy God shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.” (Deut. vii. 17, 21—23.) In the progress of the Christian warfare, the recollection of past interposition is also a great source of encouragement, in the renewed attacks of spiritual enemies. Thus the Lord strengthened the faith of Israel of old, in the view of the conflict in which they were called to engage with the devoted Canaanites : “ Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt ; the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched-out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out ; so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.” (ver. 18, 19.)

So in the Christian conflict, the Captain of the host of the Lord, the great Captain of Salvation, leads his people on conquering and to conquer. Enemies oppose ; but he prevents their malice with his care, and their artifice with his wisdom : he subdues their power by his almighty arm, and keeps them under his feet. When the conflict is urgent, and their danger pressing, he hastens to their relief ; and in the moment when they are ready to faint, his providence and grace unite to command deliverance to his people. In the mount the Lord is seen ; and the groans of despair are changed into the songs of triumph. How often has the believer to record such glorious inter-

positions of his Saviour; and, reviewing the varied scenes of his former conflicts, to say, “ He hath delivered, and does deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.” As they have no might in themselves, it is the very order of his providence and grace, and the very design of many of his dispensations, to lead them to the discovery of this, to destroy all self-confidence or self-complacency. But when, convinced of this, they are found waiting at his throne for grace and strength; the power of Christ rests upon them, his mighty Horn of Salvation throws down and destroys their enemies: in their weakness his strength is made perfect, and in their helplessness he glorifies his own all-sufficiency and grace. Thus his people do, and shall go on to conquer; daily depending upon him, and daily living by faith upon him, daily shall they experience his care and power. In him they obtain the daily victory, and, strong in the Lord and the power of his might, they triumph in Christ Jesus when they have no confidence in the flesh; and in the same way of constant dependence and of continual supply, they are led on to everlasting and final conquest. Their strength is only in him; but in him it is all-sufficient. Why then art thou fearful, O thou of little faith? Nothing need to keep you from the Saviour of sinners; nothing shall prevent your acceptance when you come; nothing can be wanted by you that is not in him; and nothing shall ever separate from his love or care, when committing yourself in faith to him, and resting in cordial reliance upon him. He has perfectly atoned for sin: on him you may rely for pardoning mercy. He has perfectly endured the curse: on him you may rest for complete deliverance. He has perfectly obeyed the law: in him by faith you are justified from all things. He has perfectly subdued the enemy of your soul; and in him you may trust for strength and for victory, till every enemy is brought beneath your feet, as they are now beneath his. He ever lives upon the throne to bestow the blessings of salvation; and therefore you may confidently expect to be raised to the enjoyment with him: for those who trust in him shall

never be ashamed or confounded, but saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. The mighty Horn of Salvation is himself exalted above all his enemies, and is placed over all for his people. He has raised up this Horn of Salvation *for us*, that under it we may rest, that in it we may confide, that by it we may fight and conquer. And it is well pleasing to God that sinners should apply to him, should trust in him, should receive and enjoy all from him; and that they should therefore glory in him and glorify him, as their only dependence—the mighty Horn of their Salvation.

In the purchase of redemption, in the meritorious attainment of its blessings, nothing remains to be done: its blessings are now therefore the free gifts of God in Jesus; and the promise is, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” In the conquest of our spiritual enemies, the great secret of the Christian triumph is living near to Jesus, and deriving strength and grace from him: whatever enemies may then arise and assault, in our weakness he will magnify his power: and, going on in his strength, though the fight of faith shall never be intermitted on earth, nor the enemy totally disabled from assaulting us; though the same temptations, trials, corruptions, and foes, shall daily oppress to the end; yet strength shall be equal to the day, grace shall be sufficient for the conflict, and the renewed attacks shall only be followed by renewed deliverance and conquest, to lead on to that last conflict in which the believer shall assuredly be more than a conqueror, through Him who hath loved him.

Fear not then, thou trembling believer: remaining corruptions should indeed greatly humble thee, as they spring from a corrupted source, and discover of what a depraved nature you are partaker, and with what reluctance it yields to the mighty power and grace of the Redeemer; but neither the remains of corruption unallowed, nor their repeated assaults, nor enemy, temptation, trial, or affliction, should discourage thy soul, prevent thy application to

Jesus, or thy faith and hope in him,—for the Almighty Saviour of sinners will save from all sin, and he has engaged that sin shall not have dominion over thee. In the Christian warfare, thou mayest be compelled to groan, being burdened, or to lament that “when you would do good, evil is present with you; that though you delight in the law of God, after the inward man, you find another law in your members, warring against the law of your mind, and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin, which is in your members;” but you may and ought also to triumph with the Apostle: “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You must not expect to find no enemies by the way, nor to be free from their continued assaults; but bring them to him daily in the prayer of faith, and in the fight of faith you shall have the daily victory: nothing else, you know, can secure and deliver you. But his unchanging love and almighty power are engaged in your behalf; his promise secures your protection; and faith may therefore be confident, that he will deliver from all. If he has called you by his grace to trust in him, and to seek his salvation; if he is become all your salvation, and all your desire; this effect of his eternal love is the pledge of everlasting love and everlasting salvation.

He will bring his people to whatever he has obtained and prepared for them. “I give unto my sheep,” says he, “eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” (John x. 28.) When represented as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, that pleasing emblem of his mediatorial character; though he appears as the Lamb which had been slain, he is still described as having seven horns (seven denoting perfection), denoting the perfection of all power and might. As such he opens the seals of Divine providence, in the conduct of his church, till they all surround his throne, to proclaim him worthy, and to ascribe the power, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honour, the glory, and the blessing to him. (Rev. v. 6—14.) But what that salvation is, in the fulness

of its blessings, which he has prepared for, and to which he will bring, his people, we must experience to know or to describe it ; for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” It is the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory : it is the complete deliverance from every sin, and every enemy ; from all we felt, and all we feared, of sorrow or distress. It is all we ever desired, or can desire, in the exercises of grace, in the views of faith, in the joys of hope, in the fullest delights of Divine love. It is the revelation of all his glories ; a revelation which includes the enjoyment, after so seeing him as he is as to be changed into the same image from glory to glory : it is the complete satisfaction of awaking up in his likeness, in his presence where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand where there are pleasures for evermore. There, “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. vii. 16, 17.)

What a glorious Saviour is the Horn of my Salvation ! Let me fly to him, and trust in him ; and obtaining an interest in him, what can I want, what need I fear ? Who, or what, can separate me from his love, or the enjoyment of all its blessings ?—Such a Saviour, so glorious, so powerful, should excite the love and adoration of such perishing sinners ; should excite the joy, the gratitude, and the praise of believing sinners. If I believe in and love him, I may cheerfully glorify him, and praise his name. If I take a believing view of the nature and the necessity of his salvation, the glory of this Saviour, the work which he has performed, and which he is now performing, together with the power, the glory, the blessings which are treasured up in him, to bring his people to the enjoyment ; this will excite my praises. My praises, indeed, now must fall infinitely short of his glory ; for the song of everlasting victory will still

fall infinitely beneath his worth and his deservings. “Blessed then be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his people, and raised up this Horn of Salvation for us, in the house of his servant David.” (Luke i. 68, 69.) Thus sang the Prophet Zacharias, when he welcomed him to this world: my soul, thou hast equal cause for thanksgiving, if inclined to welcome his residence within thee; and if, in the experience of his salvation, thou wilt be equally inclined to utter the song of praise, and to say with the triumphant Psalmist (2 Sam. xxii. 2–4), “The Lord Jehovah (Jesus) is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the Horn of my Salvation, my high tower, and my refuge. O my Saviour, thou savest me from violence: I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies.” Amen.

ESSAY IV.

Testator.

THE character of the Testator, which was given to the once dying Redeemer, is most suited to encourage our faith and hope; and the term Testament gives us one of the best views of the covenant of grace, and the nature of its blessings, as a free disposal and an irrevocable grant of certain blessings to the people of his love. The covenant of grace made with Adam, and continued till the coming of Christ himself, is therefore called *The Old Testament*: the same covenant of grace, as revealed since the coming of Christ, is called *The New Testament*. The first is the same as the last, in its nature and blessings; though the dispensation of it, on account of the manner of its discovery, as revealed in types and shadows, was designed to cease, and is now “*done away*.” The last, introduced by Christ himself, actually ratified with his blood, and clearly revealing in the Gospel his blessing of salvation, is never to be done away, but to increase in power, glory, and enjoyment, till it be consummated in eternity. Here he has bequeathed to his people all his blessings, to be received by them only in faith, freely and by sovereign grant; a bequest which he will not, and (with humility we may say it) which he cannot, because he has bound himself never to recal, and which he has confirmed by his blood and death. Thus he has freely and graciously constituted them heirs, and given them an unalienable title, which they plead by faith, to all the inheritance he has provided for them. If the bountiful bequest of the opulent and honourable be the object of desire to the needy and the distressed, how much more earnestly

should we desire to be interested in the sovereign, dying, disposal of him, who hath all treasures and riches both of time and eternity in his hand? Truly this is a better testament, as the Apostle calls it, in every respect: better than that of earthly princes; for all the bequests of dying mortals can never make me rich towards God: better than the mixed economy of the Jewish dispensation, which only conditionally secured the promised inheritance of Canaan and its blessings to the Jewish seed. Here is a better inheritance, founded upon better promises, more gracious and more secure: and yet they shall be mine, if I come as a sinner believing on Jesus; for they are made to every one that believeth, and are all yea and amen in him. “Remember me, O Jesus, with the favour which thou bearest unto thy people, and visit me with thy salvation.” Oh, let faith, itself one of thy most gracious bequests, bring me to know and enjoy all that thou hast designed to bestow on earth; that I may claim the title now; and receive from thee, and through thy blood, the eternal inheritance hereafter!

Let us contemplate its superior excellency,

In considering *the person of the Testator*.—This is none other than Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ; a Son, one with the Father, of the same nature and glory; who in the beginning was with God, and was God. The very name Jesus implies, as we have before fully proved, the idea of Jehovah becoming the Saviour. As such he is the Lord of heaven and earth; all things were created, all things are sustained, by him; and therefore, as the rightful proprietor of all, all things are at his disposal. What an exalted view must we from hence take of his unlimited ability to bestow, whatever blessings in his sovereign grace he determines to bestow upon his people! However large his promises, they cannot be beyond his power to fulfil. Indeed, as to absolute power, there is nothing, however inconceivably difficult to mortals, which he cannot effect; and nothing therefore ought to be considered as incredible which he has engaged to effect for his people.

The first act, that of his condescension, is no doubt the greatest act of his mercy, and therefore secures all the rest. A testament is only of force by the death of the testator; but how could such a glorious Testator die? And was the death of the Testator needful before guilty sinners could enjoy his blessings? Surely it was. How He, who was the eternal ever-living Jehovah, could place himself in a situation to be subjected to this, as the Mediator of the better covenant to bequeath his dying legacy to his people, is the wonderful mystery of the plan of redemption; is the admiration of angels, and will be the eternal admiration of his church. He must take a dying nature and submit to the lowest degradation of that nature: how could this be expected so far beyond our hopes? But lo! for this he becomes our Jesus, Immanuel, God with us. This is the wonderful person who, though the mighty God and the everlasting Father, is the Child born and the Son given; the person in which God and man are united; who alone, as such, could be the Mediator between God and man. Thus only could he obtain a mediatorial ability to bequeath his legacy of everlasting love: this therefore he became, that he might make sinners of mankind his brethren; and being allied to them, as in their nature, he might perform a work, and suffer a death, that might enable him to bequeath to them the purchased inheritance. As God, he sustains; as man, he dies: as man, he lies under death; as God, he cannot be holden of death: as man, he lies in the grave; as God, he rises, and triumphs, and ascends above; and as God-man he reigns upon the throne, to accomplish all the purposes of his love. Let us adore this great mystery of godliness; that one in the glorious essence Jehovah should take such a degraded nature into such a union as to constitute one person as Immanuel,—how far beyond the conception of our finite minds! Yet this the Scripture declares is the person of our Redeemer; this the dying Testator who has bequeathed all the blessings of salvation to his people. “He took not on him the nature of

angels, but the seed of Abraham; and was in all things made like unto his brethren in human nature, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 16, 17): that is, in other words, that he might die for them; and, making over to them by his sovereign appointment, might confirm to them, by his death, all that infinite wisdom, almighty power, and infinite sufficiency can bestow, throughout eternity. What love was ever like this? But our admiration will be more exalted, and our gratitude confirmed, in contemplating the substance of this testament, or the testamentary bequests, of the dying Jesus to his church.

If this Divine Testator has in himself all to give, with the absolute authority, in his mediatorial character, to give all he pleases, surely we have the highest reason, from his dying love, to conclude that, if he can give what he will, he wills to give all he can; that is, all that they need, and all for which they possess or can possess capacities of enjoyment. His word is the testament wherein all his riches are set forth, with whatever is his final absolute determination concerning them; and whatever is there recorded is, like the last will and testament of a person now deceased, the words of irrevocable truth. The riches of his Divine nature are indeed incommunicable: but the riches of his mediatorial grace and fulness are the blessings which we need, and which are suited to our powers of enjoyment; and these he gives as freely and as fully as all his people can want.

All the blessings of salvation, from the pardon of sin to the final acceptance and glorification of their persons before the throne above, are in his word bequeathed to sinners believing in his name.

This may be included in two comprehensive views;—the blessings of present grace, and the inheritance of future glory.

1. As to *the blessings of present grace*, they include in them all that we can want below.—The design of the

great Mediator's incarnation was to save sinners, and therefore to save his people from their sins. As the whole work of redemption was his own, and completed by him in all its meritorious terms; so the blessings of salvation are all the free gifts of his dying love. There are, therefore, no conditions of pardoning mercy required to be performed by the sinner, before he can come to Christ for pardon and acceptance, or he must for ever be excluded. All that the word of Divine truth directs him to do, is to come with his sins to Christ, and to receive him; to believe on him, and receive his blessings; to rest upon him, and rejoice in his salvation.

The covenant of grace, as it existed between the Father and the Son, was literally a covenant upon certain terms and conditions, to be fulfilled between the parties; and the covenant engagement ran thus: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." (Isa. liii. 10, &c.) But as it comes to us, it cannot be considered as a conditional agreement, but as a constitution of sovereign grace, in which God has revealed the method in which he will bestow his favour and his salvation, and as a free grant of all in Christ Jesus. If repentance and faith be necessary to the reception of these blessings; that repentance whereby we feel our vileness and our danger, and that faith whereby we behold and receive Christ, are the gifts of this covenant, and therefore can never be considered as the terms of it: they are distinct blessings, which his people receive from Him who is exalted to give repentance, and is the Author and Finisher of faith. As such, they can never deserve nor claim the other benefits of his death, though they are the only means whereby we can receive them. They are not the title to what he has bequeathed: this rests upon his own sovereign grant, his own good pleasure, which gives to his people a disposition to receive, and then bestows the whole; and in this view, the blessings of his salvation cannot be better represented than by

a testamentary bequest. When therefore the repenting and believing sinner returns to him, his promises are free, absolute, and full; the language of invitation and of promise is, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”—“Come now, let us reason together; and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” He gives then the virtue of his precious blood for the pardon of sin; the free, the complete, pardon of all sin: and he gives his own everlasting, all-complete, and perfect righteousness, which, when faith receives, justifies from all things. In this the guilty sinner appears without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; yea, “as a bridegroom decked with ornaments, or as a bride adorned with her jewels.” (Isa. lxi. 10.) The poor polluted sinner is thus comely in the comeliness which he puts upon him. (Ezek. xvi. 14.) He fears no more the displeasure of Him who, though he was angry, hath turned his anger away for ever. (Isa. xii. 1.) Thus, by his sovereign grace, he taketh away sin, and introduceth into the presence and favour of a reconciled God. By his love, a poor sinner, the heir of hell, becomes the child of God by adoption and grace; the heir of all spiritual blessings in time, and of glory in eternity. The gift of a new heart and a right spirit, is the peculiar gift of his covenant love: “This is the covenant that I will make with them, says the Lord; I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.” (Heb. x. 16, 17.) Is not this the foundation of every Christian grace, of every Christian excellency? Is it not the only source from whence it springs, and by which it can be brought into exercise or increase? To this blessed Redeemer, then, I must be indebted for all; for without him I can do nothing. Every act of grace lays me under a greater obligation to the Giver; and instead of increasing my deserts, increases my obligation, and should increase my gratitude. Not to myself, but to Him, must be the

glory: the grace to sanctify, and the grace to preserve and carry forward the work of sanctification, is wholly and freely, and according to his sovereign promise, from him; and, as with him are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the richness and fulness of grace, “ He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” He will give grace; and no good thing will he deny to those who walk uprightly with him.

These are his blessings by the way; but, in addition to these, he has bequeathed to them,

2. *The inheritance of glory.*—What he said to his disciples, he says to all his believing followers: “ I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.” The great Redeemer has redeemed the forfeited inheritance; and having restored the right of children to guilty and condemned rebels, he thus constitutes them the heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself. (Rom. viii. 16—18.) He himself is in the possession as the First-born among many brethren; and having gone to prepare a place for his people, he will come again, and receive them to himself, that where he is, they may be also. (John xiv. 1—3.) In his last intercessory prayer to his heavenly Father, this is his authoritative claim upon the merit of his dying love; “ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John xvii. 24.) In the work of regeneration he fits them for the inheritance; and since he has purchased and obtained it for them, and in sovereign love bequeathed it to them, he will keep them to the possession and enjoyment of it. “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” says the Apostle Peter, “ who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” (1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) His faithful promise and almighty power secure their preservation to it. In his promise he has declared,

“ I give unto my sheep eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand ;” (John x. 28, &c.) and therefore, they are kept by almighty power through faith unto salvation. (1 Pet. i. 5.) Oh glorious inheritance, of which the believing sinner is made an heir, by the dying grant of his Redeemer ! It is heaven, it is glory, it is the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory ; in a word, *it is salvation*. But “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

But where may we read the sacred register ?

The testamentary grant itself stands recorded in indelible characters, in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel.

These are the unfailing bonds of security, of the Father’s love to him, and of his love to his people ; and they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. These he has given to his church, that they may know what their riches, what their possessions are, and to what they are entitled by his sovereign grant of love. These he has thus fully recorded, that his church may continually review them, and read again and again those title-deeds which entitle them to grace and glory in Christ Jesus, to promote their faith and increase their love ; and to excite their ardour of holy desire and expectation of the grace that is to be brought to them, and the glory which is to be revealed in them. How precious is this word of the Lord ! Great and inconceivable are the riches contained in it ; and most faithful the security which it presents to the believing soul,—the infinite fulness, the unbounded sufficiency, the almighty power, the unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord their Saviour. The world, the whole world, is poor in comparison of the riches which are there bequeathed to his believing people. It is all the fulness of Jehovah Jesus, the great God our Saviour : it is a phrase which can never be conceived on earth, and which eternity will never fully unfold, by which the Apostle expresses the title and the inheritance of believers :

they are “**HEIRS OF GOD,**” of all that is in him communicable to his creatures. So the Lord represented it himself to his faithful servant of old; “Fear not, Abraham; I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.” (Gen. xv. 1.) So the Prophet describes it again; “Jehovah is the Portion of his people.” In this the Psalmist exults, “The Lord is the Portion of mine inheritance;” and another Prophet joins the triumph, “The Lord is the Portion of my soul; therefore will I trust in him.” Whatever, then, is contained in these exceeding great and precious promises, is the portion of believing sinners. Then let me seek an interest in them; and in all their glory, their fulness, their faithfulness, they shall be mine; for in this promise I behold them all secured even to me: “Who-soever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Jesus, I come to thee: thy truth and thy faithfulness secure and shall bestow thy richest grace, upon the unworthiest of thy servants. What blessings belong of right to the believing sinner! And the Gospel-promise which conveys them is very properly compared to the testament of a dying person; because—

Here also the confirmation is effected, and the unchangeable security confirmed by the death of the **TESTATOR**: “For, where a testament is, there must of necessity also be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”—The death of Christ may very properly be considered as the meritorious procuring cause of all the blessings of salvation;—the term of the everlasting covenant, which was therefore completed and ratified in his death, and confirmed and rendered sure in all its blessings: For this High Priest, “after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. x. 12—14.) Accepted in his own behalf, in our nature he took possession of the inheritance, and his acceptance is the pledge of ours.

Thus the Apostle prays that the God of peace, who had brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, would make them perfect in every good work to do his will, working in them that which was well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.) The death of Christ must also be considered (agreeably to the idea of this title) as the only means of our attaining the blessings of grace and glory, for without this his people could never enjoy the blessings; and so he informs his disciples, that it was necessary and expedient for them that he should go away, otherwise the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, would not come unto them. (John xvi. 7.) But now the Testator being dead, those who are constituted by his grace the children of the family, those who are interested in his promise, the legatees of his dying love, are necessarily become heirs; the law requires that they should be brought into possession, and a just Judge must award the inheritance to them, with all its riches, honours, and benefits. No alteration can now be made in the terms, no diminution in the blessings: it is not the worthiness of the object that forms the right and title, or that secures the enjoyment, but the grace and love, the sovereign will and disposal, of the Testator, whose will, clearly expressed, must be in justice complied with, let the subjects of the bequest be who or what they may. For, if it be but a man's testament, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. And, therefore, the covenant confirmed of God in Christ, the law cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect. (Gal. iii. 15—17.) Hence the Gospel is a free promise of life, and of the blessings of salvation to the poor and guilty sinner: all the articles thereof are signed, sealed, and closed and ratified, at the cross and in the death of Jesus: they must stand, therefore, immutably the same: the grant is sure, for God hath thus irrevocably fixed his grant of grace, and the penitent believing sinner shall find it faithful. While the testator lives, he may change his determination; but his

death confirms the will, without the possibility of any alteration. When the covenant of grace, therefore, is represented as a testament, it is designed to give us a view of its unchangeableness, that that circumstance has taken place which must for ever confirm its gifts and blessings. Hence it is called an everlasting covenant: it is irrevocably fixed, that in this way, through the blood and cross of Jesus, God will receive returning sinners; will pardon, will justify, will preserve, and will save them; and to the believing sinner all these blessings are the free unalienable gift of the Saviour, and shall be given without reserve, and without recal. “With everlasting kindness,” says he, “will I have mercy upon thee. The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.” (See Isa. liv. 8—17.) He therefore that seeks for salvation in any other way, will seek in vain. He is seeking in a way contrary to God’s determined way of saving sinners; for “Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.” He is adding the guilt of rejecting the grace of his Gospel, to the acts of disobedience to his law; and however specious his pretences, and however confident his hopes, such a conduct must originate in pride, be supported by presumption, and can be considered by the God of truth and grace only as disobedience and rebellion. God has laid the foundation in Him for a sinner’s hope to rest upon; and other foundation can no man lay, for the flood of Divine justice and indignation will prevail to sweep away every refuge of lies. Here, however, is a solid rock, even Christ the foundation of his church: the promises of his Gospel are secured by his dying love, and faith receives the blessing, without fail, and without end. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, that the promise might be sure to all the seed. There are, indeed, in the character and state of this Testator, some remarkable peculiarities.

1. Though he has confirmed his blessings by his death yet *he ever lives to put into effect his will and design.* “In

that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”—Here the penitent believer has an additional security to his humble hope in him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. All the blessings are treasured up in him, and are in his hands to give, who obtained them by the blood of his cross. He is himself exalted as the executor of his own will and testament; to call, to preserve, to bless his people, and to bring them to the full possession of the eternal inheritance with himself. “I go,” says he, “to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John xiv. 1—3.)

2. Again; He himself is not only *the Testator, but also the testamentary Bequest*.—He gives himself, all his fulness, his wisdom, righteousness, and grace; all his glorious perfections, in his Divine and Mediatorial Person, to be fully and eternally enjoyed by them; “The Lord himself is my portion and mine inheritance.”—Further,

3. The legatees of this gracious bequest are not selected *for their worthiness, but for their guilt; not for their excellency, but their necessity*.—They are rebels, guilty and condemned, who could have no claim, but his own sovereign will and pleasure. Such are invited to come, to claim upon his dying love; and when they see and feel their need, to ask that they may receive, to seek that they may find, to knock that the door may be opened unto them. When believing in this precious Jesus, they are assured that every blessing of redeeming love is theirs, as sure as though expressed by name in the testament of their dying Lord. They may trust his promise for all things contained in the promise: and what is there needful which it does not contain? Unworthiness can be no hindrance; for it was grace which devised the method of salvation for guilty sinners, and secured all its blessings in Christ Jesus. The covenant of grace is the free grant of grace, ratified in the blood and death of Christ, never to be

changed; but confirmed, to every believing sinner that pleads it at the Throne, by the unchangeable promise, “ Whosoever believeth in him, (whoever or whatsoever he may have been), shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” They are not indeed the legatees of these blessings, nor do they possess them as sinners, but as chosen of God, adopted into his family, and brought into it by grace; and thus, as the people of God, the children of his love, made so by free adoption and sovereign grace, they obtain an inalienable title to all the blessings of his salvation. But this they only know when, with the spirit of repentance and faith, they return to him, and by the spirit of adoption, with a child-like faith and temper, cry Abba, Father; surrendering themselves to him in filial obedience, and rejoicing to take him as their Father and their God. In doing this, no worthiness is any encouragement, nor is unworthiness any discouragement; but the free promise and grant of his grace in the Gospel is sufficient warrant for the most unworthy to come, for the most wretched to plead, and for the most guilty to trust in. Here every penitent believer may fix his confidence, and shall find that he will not deny his blessing, because he cannot deny himself.

How mean then is the portion of this world in all its glories, in comparison of that which belongs to the children of God! They are the legatees of a dying Jesus, who has made over to them himself, in all his blessings of grace, and in all the glory of his kingdom. The best inheritance below is fading and uncertain: time will soon consume it, or waste it away: death will interrupt the present enjoyments, and cut off from all future enjoyment for ever. Then what can the world give, to compensate for the loss of an immortal soul, and the glories of eternity? O my soul, turn thou to better things. “ The Portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of Hosts is his name.” The Portion of the believer is the Eternal Jehovah in all his fulness of sufficiency and eternal glory. It is

He who, in his mediatorial character and person, is full of truth and grace; in whom all fulness dwells,—the fulness of wisdom, the fulness of the Godhead. What a suitable Saviour is the Lord Jesus! And while he himself, with all his blessings, is made over to the needy sinner, in the promises of his Gospel, and those promises are confirmed by his cross and death, let me as a needy sinner plead those promises at the Throne, and rest upon his truth and grace to fulfil them to the uttermost. The Lord Jehovah is now righteous and just, in the pardon, justification, and salvation of the believing sinner; yea, his righteousness and justice require the fulfilment of the promises of his grace; and as he requires no worthiness as a condition, but gives all as the free gift of mercy, why should I fear to trust his love and faithfulness, who has given us his Son? Why should I fear to trust his truth and grace, who has given himself? Let me believe and glorify his name, and rejoice in the hope of all his blessings. My soul, live worthy of such exalted expectation. The last testament of thy dying Jesus, has indeed changed thy state from poverty and wretchedness, to become an heir of God, of an inheritance incorruptible. What though I am but a stranger and pilgrim here below; what though I have little of that which earth calls great or valuable; yet rich in grace, and rich in faith, heir of the promise, I boast a title, and an inheritance, before which all the possessions of earth sink into vanity. Let me not then refuse to declare myself a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, remembering that better inheritance above. Let me adore the grace which procured, the grace which gave, the grace which secures, those glorious objects of my hope and expectation; but, above all, let me adore the once dying but now ever living Jesus, my Saviour and my Friend, whose mercy and sovereign grace hath given and hath promised all. Let me wait in faith, and hope, and holy love, the full possession of those benefits, which at his cross he bequeathed to believing sinners; which he there confirmed to them by

his death, and which he now ever lives to bestow upon them.

If his death secured the purchase and the gift, his life must secure the eternal enjoyment.--I adore thee, my dying, living Lord, and receiving all from thee, I will love and serve thee upon earth; I will glorify thee here by the confidence of faith, and the cheerfulness of obedience; but I will glorify thee better, in thy presence above.

ESSAY V.

A Green Fir-Tree.

NATURE is the emblem and the shadow of what grace is the substance : and, when the Spirit of grace affords the spiritual faculties and perceptions, acting, through the medium of the spiritual understanding, upon Divine things, as the natural understanding, through the medium of natural sense, acts upon natural things ; then there is a perception of this in the soul. Were the spiritual faculties, therefore, as lively as the natural, we should have as great pleasure in the contemplation of spiritual objects, or the objects of the spiritual world, as we have in the contemplation of the things of sense ; for as our natural senses are gratified by the one, our spiritual senses would be gratified by the other. Of this world Jesus is the great glory ; yea, the All and in All ; and if our views of him were conformable to scriptural representation, what a glorious object of admiration, delight, and love, should we discover ! As nature is the shadow of his glories and perfections, in all around us we should discern his glories ; some fresh manifestation of his beauty and excellency would arise to our view ; some testimony of his preciousness, his suitableness, and fulness, would force itself upon our minds. The fields of nature would be schools of instruction, in which we should be continually learning lessons, not only of the glory of the Creator, but of the grace of the Saviour ; and our spiritual senses would be satisfied and delighted, by the opening and unfolding of the spiritual enigma, or allusion in those things, whose natural beauty and fragrance satisfied and delighted the external senses. The most beautiful, and most interesting allusions in Scripture are continually

taken from the natural world, to represent the glory and the grace of the Redeemer. Thus he is represented, in Hosea (xiv. 8), by *the Fir Tree*, which in the eastern climate grows to a great height; spreads widely; is beautiful in its appearance; extends its shade around; and flourishes as an ever-green in unchanging verdure. Its exceeding large and thick branches afford a shelter from the sun and from the rain; and while it is beautiful in itself, it yields a grateful defence to the weary traveller. Some have supposed it must be referred to that species of fir, which goes under the name of the Cedar of Lebanon, which is not found in any other part of the world. This, though not so lofty, yet extends its branches wide. Its wood is reckoned immortal, as it is almost incorruptible; and it yields an aromatic smell and fragrance*. In the passage connected with the verse where this representation is made, there are many allusions to the growth of Lebanon, which render it highly probable that this may be the case; but in either way, it forms a suitable representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in himself and in his relation to his people. It brings to our minds the recollection of his own glories and beauty, as in himself; of the fulness of his communicable glory, and of his unchangeableness and eternity in all. Our hearts are constantly too cold in these contemplations: we give them but little attention, and they make but too weak and faint an impression upon our understanding and our affections. May the present contemplation increase the view of his glory, and the grateful feelings of our minds towards him, in gratitude and holy love!

My soul, fix thine eye upon this beautiful object in nature; and in the stately appearance of the Fir Tree, contemplate,

1. *The glories and the beauty which He possesses in himself.*—In the glories of his Divine nature he excites all the admiration, and possesses all the adoration, of the heavenly world. The names, the attributes, the works,

* See Encyclop. Britan. vol. xiv. p. 763.

and the worship of **Jehovah** are all his. Here indeed our contemplation is lost in unsearchables. We cannot comprehend him in these perfections of his essence, for He is the invisible; “the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; dwelling in that light which no man hath seen or can see.” What images in the natural world can ever represent such glories as these? They are totally inadequate: creatures can never represent their Creator, nor can finite men, in their most innumerable assemblage, represent infinity. All the beauties of nature collected together are but a little ray of his immense glory; a drop from the unfathomable ocean of his perfections; a mite in comparison of his unsearchable riches; all-sufficient in himself, and deriving no accession from any other, he is the self-sufficient in power, in glory, and in holiness,—the ever blessed God.

In his person, as Immanuel, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. In him who is justly styled the Wonderful, abide the highest glories and perfections, the deepest wisdom and understanding; in him unite almighty power and infinite compassion, the strictest justice and the most unbounded mercy; eternal truth, faithfulness, and the sweetest grace, and all the choicest qualities which we ever admire in heavenly or in earthly objects, with love unequalled to render them all most beneficial to his people. He is (and it may be asked, what is he not? when he is) “the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely!” As he is the brightness of glory and the express image of the Father’s person, we are no longer at a loss in searching out those Divine glories which are suitable for us to know, as far as we are capable of knowing them: through him and in him, they are brought down to our view; where he is bodily, there is **Jehovah**, and He therefore that hath seen him, hath seen the Father. We use earthly similitudes to form some representation; but as well might we attempt to represent the glories of the sun, by a painted or a gilded circle, as describe the Divine

glories of Jehovah in the language of mortals ; or form any true image of them by the most extensive assemblage of the objects of nature or of sense. If ever admitted to behold him as he is, we shall confess that, in the most glowing description of men, the half has not been told us. " I am like a Green Fir-Tree," says the Redeemer : " from me is thy fruit found." (Hos. xiv. 8.)

2. The constant supply of vegetable moisture which preserves the Fir Tree in perpetual verdure, is here alluded to ; in order to instruct us in *the self-sufficiency, and the all-sufficient fulness of the Redeemer, to satisfy the wants and desires of his people.*—The mediatorial fulness which is in him is described as the fulness of the Godhead ; fulness of grace and truth ; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that out of his fulness all we might receive, and grace for grace. The Apostle therefore tells the Colossians that they were " complete in Christ," since they had in him all that they could want ; and all those things which others were seeking for out of Christ, they were seeking for them in shadows, the body of which is of Christ. (Col. ii. 10. 17.) In Christ Jesus we have the end of the law, the fulness of all the ceremonies, and the realities of all the blessings shadowed forth in them. In him is the constant and unfailing supply of pardoning mercy to the sinner, as well as of grace and strength to the believer.

Flowing first from his Cross, it still flows around us in his Gospel, and is continually flowing down from his throne above, where the once crucified, and now exalted Redeemer abides in all his sufficiency of grace. Therefore it is a throne of grace, where we may boldly and daily come to " obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) He bids thee come to him, thou weary and heavy laden sinner, for rest and peace ; and thou contrite, fearful sinner, for pardon and acceptance. He bids the guilty seek and find redemption in his blood ; the condemned to look to him for righteousness ; and the weak for strength. How kind, how suitable, how all-sufficient, the encouragement he holds out to thee, thou

returning penitent; while, beholding your sins and the suitableness of this Saviour, his precious promises secure your acceptance: nor can any such have reason to apprehend a rejection, since he has declared, that “him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out.” The sovereign love which excited him to make these promises is still the same; and so also is his faithfulness to fulfil them: so that “all the promises of God in Christ, are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.” If we contemplate his conduct while on earth, we behold that love displaying itself in various instances, nor ever failing those who sought to him. Had you seen him in this state of his condescension, and heard his voice inviting the weary and the heavy laden to come to him; had you witnessed the many instances in which he displayed his power and grace toward the needy and the afflicted, you would have been encouraged, you are ready to think, to come to him; and from such a condescending Saviour you might have expected to meet with pity, and to receive the aid you need. But if he be now in glory upon his throne, in our nature; it is only to complete the same purposes of grace for which he dwelt on earth as a man of sorrows; “Him hath God exalted with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins.” And still “the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” Why should the humble penitent, waiting at his throne, be unbelieving, doubtful, or fearful? Nothing can hinder even thy acceptance, but the obstinate refusal of his grace, and the love of sin. Come to him with all thy guilt and wants, and thou shalt bear thy testimony to his grace and truth. Then in the progress of thy Christian course, thou shalt find his all-sufficiency to supply thy need. “He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” He is held forth to the faith of his people as a fountain ever flowing, and never exhausted: and, while his word discovers to us our wants, and daily experience affords us the increasing proof of its truth, that

word discovers what suitable aid there is in him, and the promises of his word inform us what we may expect to receive from him. Let faith embrace those promises in their fulness and extent, and then let the believer say if there be not enough in Christ, if there be not all he needs.—“He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;” and what can we want besides? That source of supply also to which the believer looks, is not only sufficient in its fulness, but un-failing in its continuance. “The water which I shall give him, shall be in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life.” (John iv. 14.) Like the moisture of the ever-verdant Fir Tree, which constantly and unceasingly rises to communicate life, health, beauty, and viridity to every branch and leaf; so, without deficiency, without cessation, the communications of his grace flow in the influences of his Spirit into every member of his church, and into the heart of every believer, for every purpose of life, fruitfulness, and joy. Blessed Jesus, let me be so united to thee, that from thee my fruit may be found, since in thee are all my sources of supply.—But if we look upon the large, spreading, and beautiful branches of the Fir Tree, then we have also a pleasing emblem in it of,

3. *The powerful defence, and all-sufficient shelter afforded to the believer, under the protection of the Lord our Redeemer.*—In those sultry climates, nothing is more grateful to the weary traveller, than the cooling shade beneath the scorching heat of a cloudless sky. But not so welcome the most refreshing shade, in so exhausting a situation, as the assurance of redeeming mercy, and the sweet sense of redeeming love to the convinced and fearful sinner, or to the tried and tempted believer, when Jesus, he who appeared as man in our nature, becomes “the hiding-place from the wind, the covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Is. xxxii. 1, 2.) Were you ever sensible of the real nature, the evil, and the guilt of sin? Did you ever see in solemn

conviction the holiness and purity of the Divine law? Were you ever convinced of the justice of that sentence whereby it is sanctioned? Was your conscience ever suitably affected with the guilt and danger of a sinful state? Or, was your soul ever harassed with the continual influence of temptation with polluting or unbelieving thoughts, or tormented by the fierce assaults of the enemy? What burning sun could ever so exhaust the animal spirit, so fatigue the body, or depress the frame, as this distressing and affecting dispensation exhausts and wearies out the soul? If to this be added a sense and apprehension of the wrath of God justly deserved by sin, you were, perhaps, ready to say, with that eminent child of affliction, whose sorrows and whose lamentations are so beautifully recorded; “O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamities laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.” (Job vi. 2–4.) If to this be further added a solemn sense of the majesty and glory of the Lord Jehovah, the language of the astonished Prophet will, perhaps, involuntarily flow forth from the tongue; “Woe is me, for I am undone!” But now, let the Spirit of Jesus testify of him to the soul; discover his person and undertaking, the greatness of his condescension, and his finished work of redemption, when, to deliver us from the curse of the law, he became a curse for us. Let that Spirit of Jesus testify to the soul of the design of his love, and the all-sufficiency of his grace; let him bring the application of it to the heart in some gracious promise of his word: like the branches of a thick and wide-spreading tree covering and refreshing the weary traveller, just ready to perish in the sultry heat, it calms the fearful apprehension of the soul, satisfies the conscience, revives the spirit, soothes with present peace, and exhilarates with future hope. Now, says the believer, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.

(Song ii. 3.) The Prophet here describes himself in a posture of ease and pleasure: he sat down, in a situation most refreshing, under the branches of a wide-spreading tree, where the fruit, clustering upon its dependant branches, affords him a ready and a sufficient supply of cooling and salubrious provision. Such is the satisfaction of the believing mind, reclining under the protection and shadow of the Redeemer, tasting of his love, and feeding upon the blessings of his salvation. When faith takes hold of Jesus as presented in the promise of his word, it relieves every anxiety, heals every fear, and quiets every distress; the conscience is satisfied with pardoning mercy; and the heart is at rest in the confidence of his protecting wisdom, love, and care. What can I want, my soul, with such a Friend and Saviour? Let Jesus be mine, and that peace which passeth all understanding shall delight my spirit. I shall rest beneath his shadow, free from every distressing fear. The scorching beams of affliction or temptation shall be checked by the spreading branches of this tree of life, its ever verdant, never withering branches; and the fruits which hang thick upon them of pardoning mercy and everlasting love, shall nourish my soul to everlasting life. Thus shall Jesus be more and more precious to my soul; “whom having not seen I love; in whom though now I see him not, yet believing, I will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;” (1 Pet. i. 8);—thus by faith feeding upon him, and receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul. (ver. 9.) If we refer the allusion to the cedar of Lebanon, then it may denote, also,

4. *The delightful fragrance of his grace and love, to the conscience and to the heart.*—This large and noble tree not only affords a constant protecting shade from the scorching beams of an eastern sun, but a refreshing and exhilarating perfume, which gratifies ever sense. So it is said (Hos. xiv. 6), “His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.” But what is this in comparison of the sweet application of pardoning grace and redeeming love; of

new-covenant mercy, and the blessings of salvation, by the powerful and grateful influences of the Spirit of Jesus, when he takes of the things of Jesus and reveals them to the soul,—when he testifies of him, and glorifies him in the heart and conscience, in all the fulness and suitableness of his salvation,—when the soul applies to, and relies on, the blessed Jesus,—when in all his infinite excellency and abounding grace he is received, and his all-sufficiency is realized, in the lively exercise of faith,—when the soul takes up, as it were, its residence beneath his sheltering and reviving shade, and is refreshed with the abundance of his consolation? In the secret recesses of the closet, in the retired scenes of meditation and the exercises of prayer, in the reading of his word, or at other times, amidst the congregation of his saints, in the public services of the church, and the solemn ordinances of his house, the believing soul finds delight in the manifestation of his power and glory, or is gratefully exhilarated with seasons of love, in communion and fellowship with the Saviour of sinners. Then it longs for the continuance of this glorious visit, and will gradually prolong the spiritual services, which afford such sweet delight and pleasure, the foretaste, the anticipation, of more exalted enjoyments above. If such the delights of faith, says the believer, beholding him at a distance, when seeing through a glass darkly, what shall be the vision of his glory to see him as he is? These are but the earnest, and some small taste below, of the glory that is to be revealed, of the grace which is to be brought unto us at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. They are the transitory refreshment by the way, as the weary pilgrim travels through this barren wilderness. Here and there he meets with some verdant spot, some pasture in the wilderness, adorned with the tree of beauty and of fragrance, where he may recline and refresh himself, to give fresh strength and ardour for the long and dreary journey. The refreshment is often most opportune, and the most animating; when ready to faint, again he renews his strength to run without weariness, and walk without

fainting, in the Christian course; and so he goes from strength to strength, till he obtain the end. Thus, when he again engages in the duty of the closet, or in the services of the house of God, let me again, he says, behold thy power and thy glory, so as I have before seen them in the sanctuary. Lift up again, O Lord, the light of thy countenance upon me; again visit me with thy love; again reveal thyself to me, as thou dost not unto the world. Thus refreshed, my soul shall still hold on, and traverse the path of this inhospitable wilderness, continually refreshed with thy repeated consolation, and supported by that renewed manifestation of grace and favour. Glory be to the dear Redeemer for this discovery of grace, the earnest of full enjoyment; when, beholding him as he is, we shall know what he is in all his glories, in all his grace, in all his fulness, and preciousness; when we shall sit for ever under his shadow as the Tree of Life, in the paradise of God.—But the allusion is perhaps designed principally to represent,

5. *His unchangeableness and perpetuity, both in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his mediatorial blessings.*—The Fir Tree, always the same in its beauty and verdure, adorns the sultry summer, or the wintry cold. Unaffected by the storm, the nipping frost, or the frigid air of winter, which is so destructive to vegetable life; unaffected equally by the scorching heat of summer, which dries up the vegetable moisture, and exhausts the very spring of life; through all, it erects its ever-verdant head, and spreads its wide-extended branches, adorned with their ever green and glossy leaves. It is not, therefore, improperly used, as an emblem of the unfailing supplies, and all-sufficient power and virtue, which dwell for ever in Jesus, and render him the unfailing source of every blessing to his people. Whatever beauties, whatever glories are in his person, whatever fulness of blessings are treasured up in him, he is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The same in his Divine all-sufficiency, nothing can ever affect or exhaust his glories; the

same in his love to sinners, in his delight in his people, in his faithfulness to his promises ; He is the same suitable object of their trust, in every time and in every need ; the same for ever in his designs of love, as when he was set up from everlasting, and his delights were with the sons of men ; they may therefore be confident of the highest exercise of love in all his ways. The dealings of his providence may vary, his dispensations may wear a different aspect ; but He himself, like his promises, is still the same : and all his ways and dispensations, whatever their outward appearance may be, originating from the same everlasting love of his heart, are directed but to one end ; which end they shall certainly accomplish, in connection with his own glory, and that is their real good, their present and eternal salvation. He is, therefore, not only a constant but an eternal fountain of supply to them. He has promised, and, as he is able, he will perform it : “ I give unto my sheep eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” (John x. 28.) His Divine glories can never change ; for with him, as such, there is no variableness neither shadow of a turning. His mediatorial glories are connected with his Divine, that they may be the same ; and therefore, “ He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” He that formed the purpose and laid the plan in eternity, completed the work of redemption upon the cross ; and this gave an earnest of completing the work of salvation. He calls his people in due time ; and, by calling them as the effect of everlasting love, has given them a pledge, that he will preserve and save them with an everlasting salvation ; for “ faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.” His covenant is therefore an everlasting covenant, and his righteousness an everlasting righteousness : his mercy is built up for ever : his salvation is an everlasting salvation ; and his promise, which never fails, hath spoken it : “ He that believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” “ This is the will of the Father, which he

came down to perform (John vi. 40); and he will perform it to the end, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Thus he shall be glorified in the Father (John xiii. 31, 32), and his people glorified in him. (John xiv. 20—24.) How soothing, how encouraging the view which opens before us in the contemplation of these glories of Jesus, our Redeemer! In the consideration of our own weakness and changeableness, the continual changes which are taking place all around, and the uncertainty and changeableness of all creatures; and especially in the reflecting upon our enemies, difficulties, and dangers; this is the only view which can support or console the mind. All things are in the hand of the unchangeable Jehovah our Jesus, whose love designed, and whose power and faithfulness will accomplish, the salvation of his people. Though all flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of grass; when the grass withers, and the flower thereof falleth away, the word of our God shall stand for ever. When all things here shall be dissolved and pass away, then the glory of his salvation shall be complete.

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens,” says the Lord our Saviour, “and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.” (Isa. li. 6—8.)

Contemplate then, O believer, thy security. When you saw your guilt and danger, discovering the suitableness of this Friend of sinners in the power of his Divine nature, in the all-sufficiency of his mediatorial person and grace, you fled for refuge to lay hold on him as the hope set before you; your faith rested upon him as the propitiation set

forth by God for the remission of your sins ; and, commanded to believe and trust in the word of God, you obeyed that Divine command and wait for the fulfilment of the promise, that “ He that believeth shall have everlasting life.”

While you contemplate the glories of his person as Immanuel, uniting all the perfections of Godhead with all the kindness and sympathy of the human nature ; while you remember the character and offices which in that nature he hath assumed, and the work which he hath performed for thee ; while you meditate on the promises of his word, and behold the immense funds of spiritual blessings which are there made over to the faith of his people, how often does faith find sweet repose amidst the various trials and sorrows of life ? Beneath his shade you rest in confidence, while, on the abundant fruits of his redeeming love, you feed and are refreshed. Come still to this same refreshing shadow, when a sense of guilt distresses thy conscience, or the power of corruption grieves and torments thy heart ; come here and find a shelter amidst all the storms of life, from all the violence of enemies, difficulties, trials, and temptations. He has still all fulness to supply thee ; still he extends his delightful shade all around, and invites thee to its refreshing rest. Here let thy soul by faith recline, and thou shalt feel the consolation. He will never fail thy hope nor trust : protected by his love and power through all the perils of the wilderness ; comforted in thy many weary steps with his repeated consolation, he will bring thee into the eternal shelter of his paradise above. His unchangeable faithfulness secures thy faith and hope, thy preservation and consolation through time, and thine eternal enjoyment of salvation. And He who has been thy shelter and thy hope hitherto, will be the same for ever : that Jesus who from eternity has had his delights with the sons of men, who loved his people with an everlasting love, and is now their strength and consolation, will prove himself to be, as yesterday and to-day, so for ever the same.

ESSAY VI.

Fountain.

AMIDST the various emblems which are taken from nature, to represent the person and grace of our Redeemer, there is none more suitable, or more comprehensive, than that which is now to engage our meditation. It leads our thoughts directly to the Cross ; and brings before the eye of recollection, the mingled stream of water and of blood, which flowed from the pierced heart of the Redeemer, to cleanse and purify the soul, and obtain eternal redemption for us. This scene was the grand subject of prophecy ; the great act which the sacrifices and ceremonies of every preceding dispensation presented to the expectation of believers, which all represented the dying love of the Saviour, and the atonement in his blood ; and shewed, that without shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin. As therefore the ceremonies of the Levitical dispensation were typical of the blessings of the Christian dispensation, we must seek, in the former, for the reason and the foundation of Christian facts and doctrine : nor shall we ever understand clearly the doctrines of Christianity, but in proportion as we understand the nature and the circumstances of that dispensation. The reason which is there given for the prohibition of the eating of blood is most clearly descriptive of the nature, design, and typical object of their sacrifices : “ For the life of the flesh is in the blood ; and I have given (or appointed) it to be upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls ; for it is blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Lev. xvii. 11.) How strongly significant is this, of the atonement of the blood of Christ ! In the daily sacrifices, in the offerings on

the great day of atonement, and in the slaying of the paschal lamb, He was held out as “the propitiation through faith in his blood.” His Cross therefore was the great object of them all. This is celebrated and honoured in the Scriptures, in a manner very different from the cold expressions of commendation which we find in the writings of Christians, who call themselves rational Christians, and who have reduced Christianity to a system of moral precepts. It is every where alluded to as the wisdom and the power of God; the chief, the pre-eminent circumstance in the plan of his Infinite Wisdom, and that which he attends, especially with his almighty power, unto the salvation of guilty sinners.

The Prophet Isaiah, in the most affecting description of his humiliation, represents him as wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, enduring the chastisement of our peace, and as having laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isa. liii.) The Prophet Daniel describes the Messiah, in his humiliation, as cut off, but not for himself; as finishing transgression, making an end of sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness. (Dan. ix. 24—26.) And the Prophet Zechariah—in the connection of that beautiful passage, in which he presents him to the faith of Israel, under the expressive representation which we are now considering, as the “*Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness*”—describes him as pierced, when the sword awoke against the man who was Jehovah’s fellow. (Zech. xiii.) It is, no doubt, in allusion to this ceremonial sacrifice and prophetic description, that in the very first exhibition of the Redeemer, in his personal ministry on earth, he was pointed out, by his great forerunner, as the Lamb of God, the Paschal, the Sacrificial, the Atoning Lamb, who taketh away the sin of the world. In this view the Apostle glories in the Cross; or in the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer, and would know nothing in his ministry but Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ crucified. (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And another Apostle triumphs in the infinite value of the price of our redemption; which price was, “not

corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. i. 18.) It was not, then, without a mysterious meaning; as we shall see, in the course of our subject, that the water and the blood together flowed from the pierced side of the Redeemer upon the cross. Water and blood were the real matter of the Jewish ceremonies; they are the matter, real or figurative, of the Christian sacraments: nor is it without reason that the sacred Evangelist speaks of it in so solemn and interesting a manner,—“ He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe;” (John xix. 34—37); or that he again alludes to it in one of his Epistles, with evident concern to establish the reality of the fact. “ This is He that came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (1 John v. 6.) Here is the Fountain of our redemption, the Source of all the blessings of salvation and of eternal bliss.

Let us behold the blessed Jesus under this beautiful figure, and inquire more minutely,

Why he is thus compared, and in what respects the similarity is most appropriate.—No doubt the image is intended to represent,

1. *The greatness, as well as the suitableness, of the Saviour's grace*: and this we shall find it especially does, when we consider the analogy between its source or rise, and the origin and supply of redeeming blessings.—A fountain has a source which is invisible, and apparently inexhaustible. It most probably arises from the abyss, and is supplied by the waters of the great deep within the earth. But however this may be, the fulness of Jesus is certainly supplied from the invisible source of his Divine nature, and arises out of the depths of his unsearchable Godhead. As his Divine power and glory give the dignity and value to his offering; as these alone could give power and virtue to his atoning blood, and merit to his everlast-

ing righteousness ; so also out of the depths of his infinite power, wisdom, grace, love, and mercy, flow all the visible streams which water and refresh his church, and the souls of believers : because he ever liveth, therefore it is that he is able to save unto the uttermost. But here are unfathomable depths ; here is a height, a length, a breadth, and a depth, which surpass all understanding. The origin of redemption must be traced up to the eternal counsels of redeeming love : there the Apostle leads us, and the believing mind delights to follow him : “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. i. 3—9.) “ With him,” still, therefore, “ is the fountain of life ; and in his light shall we see light.” (Psal. xxxvi. 9.) To sovereign grace we trace up every blessing as its origin ; and still we are dependant for the supply upon the almighty power, and infinite sufficiency of Jehovah. The promises of the Old Testament seem principally to be founded upon this ; and the encouragement for his people to expect their fulfilment is derived from this : “ When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord Jehovah will hear them ; I the God of Israel will not forsake them : I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” (Isa. xli. 17, &c.) As if he had said, I will repeat again the miracles of my power and grace, if necessary for their support and supply ; for my name and my sufficiency is still the same. The reason of the security and deliverance of his people is represented as arising from the unchangeableness of his nature and his purposes, as Jehovah. “ I am the Lord Jehovah ; I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Mal. iii. 6.) But while this allusion points us to the infi-

nite depths of his Divine nature, and the eternal purposes of Jehovah as the cause of all, it most appositely represents,

2. *The fulness of his supply.*—As a fountain supplied by the internal waters of the great deep is not affected by external causes, since its source is removed far beyond their influence, so it flows always with equal copiousness, in the cold and frost of winter, or in the exhausting influence of the summer's heat.

Is not this an emblem of Him who, as the Fountain of life, still remains filled with saving blessings, and flows with undiminished streams; of him who always abides rich and copious in the waters of salvation, and flowing with equal abundance all around; of him who is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? While his Divine fulness is the same, he must possess the same fulness of blessings for his people, supplied from that Divine source which is inexhaustible. There can be no deficiency, therefore, in that Jesus in whom we trust, since in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: in his mediatorial character it was well-pleasing that in him all fulness should dwell, "all fulness of grace and truth." For every want, for all our wants together, for all sin and for all uncleanness, there is in this Fountain a resource undiminished, a virtue never failing. We may come again and again, and still shall find sufficient; for it flows and overflows in an abundance never to be exhausted. No sin can be too great for its virtue, no number of sins too many for its copious streams, no iniquity too defiling for its cleansing efficacy; for "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) We cannot bring a sin but it can purify, a want but it can supply, a desire but it can fulfil. Nothing can be too great, too large, too many, too defiling, for the infinite sufficiency of its waters and the vast variety of their virtue. The impediments to our reception are not in him but from ourselves; from our darkness and unbelief, not from the defect of fulness in

him. Through unbelief we have no vessel to draw with, or no capacity of receiving; and therefore it flows around us without our benefit or enjoyment: “But the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus; and can make all grace abound toward us, that we may have all-sufficiency in all things.”

3. From the same cause, like a fountain, its streams are *perpetually flowing without interruption and without failure*.—Our enjoyment indeed may be interrupted for the reason just now given: unbelief may prevent our beholding or using these abundant waters of life. He may thus appear to delay the communication of his blessings; but this arises, not from any deficiency in the Fountain, but from some failure in us; and thus it is often wisely ordered, to shew us our dependence upon him for every blessing; to make us sensible of our own emptiness and wants; and, in the end, to secure all the glory of every blessing of salvation to himself, as is his due.

But the waters of this Fountain are living waters; not like the waters of a stagnant pool, that stand in one dead mass, without any change till they often corrupt and putrify, but ever fresh, and continually rising from its unsearchable and unfathomable source. They are living waters also, because they are always moving with life-giving influence; ever abundant and ever efficacious to the application of faith. Come as many as may, and as often as we will, this Fountain is never dried up, but flows and overflows; nor shall a poor thirsty or polluted sinner ever come in vain. The Fountain of Divine mercy can never fail, can never be exhausted; but will remain as full as ever when the innumerable multitude of saved sinners have experienced its influence, and drank abundantly at its streams. The covenant God, who is our refuge, “is a present help in every time of trouble;” from his throne flows the river which maketh glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. (Psa. xlv. 1, &c.) From him all those streams are supplied which now

flow through his ministers, his means, and his ordinances. These are but the channels, and empty without the supply from his fulness; but filled to the full satisfaction of every member of his church, when he flows upon them in the abundance of his grace, and through them upon his waiting and believing people. Then their “souls are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and they are made to drink of the rivers of his pleasure.” (Psa. xxxvi. 8.) To such a perpetually flowing fountain our Lord himself compares the grace which he communicates, when addressing the woman of Samaria: “The living water which I bestow,” says he, “shall be in him as a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life;”—flowing with unceasing and undiminished fulness through time; it shall flow on to the kingdom of heaven, and there flow on to the endless ages of eternity. When it has cleansed the conscience from sin, it shall supply the growth and consolation of the believer; shall fulfil his every want through the pilgrimage below, continually ready in every necessity and every distress. Like the waters of the stricken rock, it shall follow the church through the wilderness without ceasing, till all her members have come to the land of promise. But here the emblem is deficient; for it shall not then cease, when arrived in the Canaan which is above, but shall flow as the pure river of the water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, watering the surrounding place, and producing eternal beauty, fruitfulness, and joy, through all the happy abodes. (Rev. xxii. 1, &c.) This is our boast and glory,—Jesus Christ, the same through life, through death, and in the eternal world, where eternal songs shall celebrate his praise!

But the excellency of this Fountain will more appear, not only in its infinite origin, its abundance, and its perpetuity, but by a more distinct consideration,

4. *Of its virtues.*—The great design of its opening was to cleanse his people from their sins; for this purpose it was appointed, and for this purpose it was broken up on the cross. One principal use of water is to cleanse and

purify ; and the design of that copious stream of water and of blood which flows from the Cross of Jesus is the same, that “ we might be washed from our sins in his blood,” both from their guilt and from their power.

This precious Fountain is to cleanse my soul,

1. *From the guilt of all my sin.*—But well may the humble penitent ask, Are its virtues sufficient for this? Can or will the Lord Jesus effect, through his atoning blood, so gracious, so difficult, a work? and may that grace, that benefit, be mine? Yes; the virtue of this Fountain is as infinite as the abundance of its supply. It is as far beyond our comprehension in its efficacy as it is in its source; for both are derived from the same infinite sufficiency and Divine glory of the Redeemer. The blood of the legal sacrifices was but a shadow and a type; but, through the Divine appointment, they were effectual to answer all their intended purposes of legal purification; and when the atonement was made upon the altar, the promise was, “ Their sins shall be forgiven them.” But “ if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. ix. 13, 14, &c.) “ By his offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (See Heb. x. 14, &c.) “ We are redeemed, not with corruptible things, but the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.” It is the blood of Him who was Immanuel, God with us, and which therefore partakes of the infinite dignity of the Godhead: and hence the church of God is called, the church which he purchased with his own blood. In virtue, therefore, of the union of that human nature in which the blood was shed, with the Divine nature of the second Person in the Godhead, the same infinite dignity is derived to it. It must, therefore, be far beyond the demerit of our sins, of every sin, of the greatest sin, or of all our sins together. Yea, could we suppose

the sins of all the world collected together on the head of one guilty creature, still the virtue of the blood of Christ, the Son of God, Immanuel God with us, would be sufficient to purify and to justify from all: still it might be proclaimed, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and every guilty sinner, when humbled under sin, and brought by faith to the Cross of Jesus, might still dismiss every fearful apprehension, and plead, in the confidence of faith, the promises of his word, that "whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out; and whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life." Behold the proof! See the doctrine illustrated in the actual pardon, justification, and salvation of a Manasseh, a Saul, a Magdalene, and even of Corinthian sinners! When he who filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, he who furiously persecuted the church of Christ; when the polluted Magdalene, a sinner by way of eminence; when Corinthian fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, are washed, are justified, are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God, who shall lie down in despair? for what sins can be too great for such mercy and such grace? (See 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1—13: Acts viii. 3, 4; ix. 1, 3, 4, 15, 16: Luke vii. 47: 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.) The declaration of the Apostle as to himself may be applied to all of these: "For this cause they obtained mercy, that in them first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 12—17.)

2. Another effect of the waters of this Fountain is, *a deliverance from the power of all sin.*—This was the ultimate design of the condescension of the Redeemer: He gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water through the word. (Eph. v. 25, 26.) Here then we see the use of the water with the blood, and the reason why the Evangelist so strongly insists upon the reality of the fact; that as water is the

constant emblem of the grace of the Holy Spirit, it might be evident that in Jesus was that suitable supply which could cleanse from every pollution.

He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus ii. 14.) And as the Son of God was manifest to destroy the works of the devil, for this purpose God hath raised him up, and hath sent him to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquity. (Acts iii. 26.) That nature also in this might be an emblem of grace, God hath put into many waters a peculiar and appropriate virtue for the healing of particular disorders. To these the diseased are continually resorting, in great numbers, to apply them, and to experience their healing power. Alas! how few are applying to this Fountain of the waters of life, through a dreadful insensibility of their spiritual maladies! These earthly springs are not sure in their operation; and if they effect the desired cure, it is only a temporary relief to a dying body; but the Fountain of Life is certain, in its effect, to all who apply it in faith, and effects the healing of the soul to life everlasting. Oh that we were but more sensible of our necessity, and its inestimable value! for then would Jesus indeed be precious in this delightful allusion. When the sinner feels his own pollution, then his cleansing, healing, grace is indeed most precious; and when the humble penitent first begins to feel its efficacy, he acknowledges in it his regenerating power and converting influence. It is most truly the water of life; for it gives new and spiritual life to the soul, before dead in trespasses and sin. It changes, it sanctifies, it renovates the heart, and transforms it into the divine nature. (2 Pet. i. 1—4.) The dead sinner is born again; his heart is changed from the love of sin to the love of God, to a delight in his salvation, and loving obedience to his commands. Sin, therefore, has no more dominion, because he is not under the law, but under grace. Now the more he applies to Jesus in faith, and the more he uses this sacred Fountain, the more abun-

dantly he experiences its grace and efficacy: the dead sinner is quickened, the leprous soul is cleansed; sin becomes weaker, and the life of God is more powerful and vigorous; till, at last, the whole body of sin shall be destroyed, and the saved sinner shall drink freely from the Fountain-head, as it flows from the throne above. Oh, how amazing the efficacy of this Fountain of the Cross, the blood and water which flowed there from the Redeemer's side! Come, sinner, wash and be clean; drink and be quickened; and in every time of need renew the healing draught: drink again and again, in rich abundance, till cleansed, justified, sanctified, and eternally saved. But remember that without the washing of this Fountain, polluted with all the filth of sin, both in nature and in practice, there is nothing that can cleanse thy soul; "For there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." The careless sinner, without an interest in the blood of Christ, will perish; the most self-righteous, without an interest in the righteousness of this Redeemer, and in his obedience even to the death upon the cross, will never be delivered from the curse. The pride of Naaman had availed him little, though he had washed in all the waters of Abana and Pharpar, had he not submitted to wash in the waters of Jordan, as commanded of the Lord by the Prophet. Whatever exalts itself against the glory and the work of Christ, must be humbled and brought down; whatever opposes him, must be destroyed. Whatever is adhered to besides him, in the great business of salvation, must be laid aside; yea, must be crucified at his cross, and all other resources will be but broken cisterns. If unwilling to come to him, through the love of sin or the pride of self-righteousness, the poor polluted sinner can never be cleansed, can never be justified, can never appear in the sight of God; but when sensible of the necessity of his atonement, through the guilt and defilement of sin, if the vilest sinner comes by faith to this Fountain of the Redeemer's blood, he shall experience its

purifying influence, its healing virtue, and the fulness of its blessings.

When its pardoning and cleansing influence is felt, it becomes the stream of refreshment and consolation through the wilderness (Joel iii. 18); and the Fountain which comes forth from the house of the Lord shall water the dreary valley, &c. The water of his grace is, therefore, represented by the Saviour as satisfying the thirsty, so that he that drinks it shall thirst no more. It quenches the thirst after earth and sin, though it still increases the holy desire after spiritual blessings, which it satisfies again and again with the sweetest enjoyment; and from hence all spiritual blessings flow, the blessings of grace, to the full ocean of glory. Blessed Fount! Give me, O Lord, of this water, that I may drink and thirst no more.—But it is the most peculiar excellency of this Fountain, that it is called *an open Fountain*. It was no doubt opened in the eternal counsels and purposes of Jehovah; but the opening of the Fountain is the place where it breaks forth from the great deep, where it first becomes visible, and flows out for use. In this view it was more especially opened, in the first promise of grace to fallen man: then the stream of mercy began to break forth, and all the characters, work, and blessings of the Redeemer were manifested to sinners of mankind. The stream flowed on, increasing and enlarging in the promise and prediction of the Prophets, till, in the incarnation of Jesus, it appeared in abundant fulness; when He, who was the Word, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i. 14.) But the opening of the Fountain leads the mind of the believer more directly to the gloomy scenes and solemn transactions of the cross. There the nail, the spear, the thorn, began to break the ground, near the mysterious source of grace, till the soldier's spear pierced his side, and opened the way for the water and the blood, that flowed to cleanse my soul, and discovered the fountain which can never be exhausted. Oh, blessed

Jesus, adored be thy name, that thou shouldst condescend to be broken up from thy very heart, that the healing stream might issue for the salvation of thy people! The Fountain which has thus been opened, is still kept open in the proclamation of the Gospel; and still it is the character, and ever will be, of this Fountain, that it is an open Fountain. When waters are valuable, they are generally inclosed, locked up, and appropriate; but the streams of salvation from the Cross of Christ still flow around us, in a free and abundant current.

1. Look at the glorious *invitation* of the Gospel: there every stumbling block, every impediment is removed; there the Fountain of Salvation is discovered in all its suitability and sufficiency; there the humble needy sinner is charged to come: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and ye that have no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden;" and "if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

2. In the glorious *promises* of the Gospel, which are connected with every invitation, the way is rendered still more plain and easy, and the fulness and freeness of the waters of life more abundantly displayed. The exceeding great and precious promises encourage us to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, whence this water issues, in every time of our need;—and,

3. *The ministry of the word* is expressly designed to keep this fount open to the eye of faith. (Luke xiv. 17.)—His ministers are only his ambassadors and messengers sent on purpose to discover its reality, glory, fulness, and freeness; to tell of its virtues, to warn sinners of the dangers of neglecting it, and to invite, and command, and encourage them to use its streams. (2 Cor. v. 20.) Never was encouragement more decisive; never could blessings be more full or more free. If the humble penitent is inquiring as to his right to use the opening and flowing stream, what can be more decisive than the free

and gracious declaration of the word of truth? When the Prophet Zechariah speaks of the opening of this Fountain, he represents it as designed for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; *i. e.* for all classes of the people, high and low, rich and poor. Thus in the days of his flesh the rich, the poor, the needy of every description, flocked around the benevolent Saviour; and never came in vain. Still, from his throne above, none are prohibited, none are excepted; nor shall any be refused who do not refuse to come; and all who need, are invited and commanded. The water of Salvation, flowing from the cross of Christ, is like the water from the smitten rock in Horeb, which flowed throughout the camp, that every thirsty Israelite might partake and be refreshed. None need stand to ask, Is it for me? See how it flows to the poorest, to the meanest, to the most distant: see how they push forward to receive the welcome stream; how they drink and are refreshed. So the wounded Israelite looked to the brazen serpent, at God's command, and found life and health: and so shall all who come to Jesus; for "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Many can bear their testimony that it is yet open: they have come, they have received, they enjoy its purifying and refreshing waters. They came as miserable and dying sinners; poor and needy, thirsting for the waters of life, and they found it open to the view of faith, and open to the hand of faith. They found from that Jesus who is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, all the blessings which they needed: they were pardoned, justified, sanctified, and comforted; and they invite you to receive and rejoice in the same. (1 John i. 3.) How absurd, then, is that unbelief which hesitates to come to Christ! Whatever reasons may be given from our unworthiness or necessity, these are rather reasons for hastening to that Fountain, which was opened for such, and designed to communicate the blessings which they need. When the sinner sees his sinfulness, there is in the grace of Christ an infinite suit-

ableness and sufficiency presented to his view, as flowing from the Cross in the invitation and promises of the Gospel; and while passing through the pilgrimage of life, it is the method of Divine Wisdom to make us sensible of our need and our dependence; and then to supply us out of the abundance of his grace. Thus his grace is esteemed; the glory is given to him: He appears as the only Deliverer; and thus he teaches us the necessity and utility of humble and simple faith upon him. Thus we are deriving, below, the application of faith: in the prayer of faith we encourage ourselves in him, and hope to the end.

4. But this Fountain is peculiarly opened to the heart, *when the Spirit of Jesus discloses it*, and grants the eye of faith to behold its streams.—Though the waters of life are flowing all around, till then, alas! there is no discovery of their reality or excellency. Like Hagar in the wilderness, though the Fountain is near, it is unperceived, till the Spirit of grace point it out, and call to observe Christ's suitability. Then the repenting sinner discovers it by the eye of faith, and comes and rejoices in its fulness. But let us remember there must be a real application of its waters: the Fountain must be used, or it will not avail us. Naaman must dip in Jordan, and the poor cripples of Bethesda must be put into the pool, or they will come away without the blessing. There must then be an application by faith, a communion and fellowship with the Redeemer: in the use of his means and ordinances, his blessing and his grace must be really received, or in vain it flows as to us. The mere professor, who stands admiring the Fountain, without using its healing stream in repentance, faith, and love, will still be destitute of its cleansing and healing virtue. We must, therefore, see and feel our need of it, or we shall never come to it. So the Prophet describes the Israelites as prepared for its discovery, by the Spirit of grace and of supplication; by deep repentance, and a view of the crucified Jesus. (Zech. xii. 10.) "And in that day," says he, "the Fountain shall be opened for sin and for uncleanness." (xiii. 1.) Be of good cheer

then, thou contrite penitent : do not delay thy application to the Saviour through a sense of sin ; for it is for sin and for uncleanness that this fountain is opened. If mourning for sin, you are the very character to which the Prophet alludes, as suited to receive its healing virtues. Do not exclude yourself by hesitating whether it is for you, for it is for all who come. Come, and its blessing, believing, shall be yours. If you have received of its cleansing, purifying, and refreshing stream, yet come daily while you feel your necessity and guilt. Prize the Fountain, use its water, and receive its benefits. As it now flows from the Cross through the Gospel, to cleanse and purify, so it shall soon be opened from before the throne, to form the river, or rather the ocean, of pure pleasure and delight, from which you shall drink fresh and abundantly through all eternity. And, while it flows through earth, “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come ; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.”

ESSAY VII.

Creditor.

WHEN our Lord was in the house of Simon the Pharisee, he spoke a parable full of consolation to the penitent sinner, and of instruction to his church. He represents himself under the character of a most kind and forgiving Creditor, who claims the love and gratitude of his people, by the free remission of the greatly accumulated debts which they owe to him. He, no doubt, is the Creditor to whom we are here represented as so greatly indebted; for the parable was spoken when he was exercising his authority in the forgiveness of a woman who was, by way of eminence, called a sinner (Luke vii. 47—49); and by it he justified her conduct, and condemned the cold reception he had met with from the self-righteous Pharisee.

In every view, the application opens the glory of his character, while it proves his Divine power and authority; for “who can forgive sins but God only?” It manifests also his great tenderness and compassion: it discovers him as fulfilling the grand design of his undertaking in the everlasting covenant, and his mediatorial office; and it enforces the infinite obligation which we are under to him, for his infinite and unequalled love.—Let us take a view of this character of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our debt indeed is infinite, and we have nothing to pay, and are consequently exposed to the demands of justice. But his love and tenderness are therein infinite: we need not, therefore, fear to take a view of the whole state of our miserable insolvency; and the more we are brought to self-humiliation, the more glory shall we render to him for his grace, and

the more sensibly shall we feel the debt of love, which we must be everlastingly paying, and which never can be paid.

1. If we consider him as our CREDITOR, we have *a debt of immense obligation*, which we have never paid.—As creatures, we must be under the law of the Creator: and having received all by an act of his most sovereign will and grace, we are entirely his; we have nothing which we can with any propriety call our own. Every power, every faculty, every ability, is his gift, and absolutely dependant upon him. The obligations arising from such a state are entire, total, and universal. They are summed up in the command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;” a command, from the obligation of which no creature can be held free. He who desires such a liberty is, in fact, in a situation far departed from original rectitude, in a frame of alienation, and a temper of rebellion against God. This state requires, this love implies, that we should be entirely consecrated to his service; that his will should be our rule, and obeyed with delight; that every command should be totally and cheerfully observed; that every faculty of the mind, every emotion of the affections, and every exercise of the will, should be entirely regulated by his authority.

This was the state and temper of man in his original creation, and during his abode in Paradise; and reason, rightly instructed, will still acknowledge its propriety. If it be not so now in fact, yet our obligations are not changed. If man no longer possesses the inclination, it is no less his duty to love the Lord his God, and to manifest that love in all its suitable and genuine effects. In the failure of the payment of this debt of duty which we owe to the great Creator, a sinner becomes more indebted, and more deeply involved.

2. We owe, as sinners, *a debt of satisfaction*, to the law which we have broken, to the government which we have dishonoured, and to the justice which we have provoked.—This indeed is a debt which places man in a mi-

serable, and spiritually insolvent state. A righteous lawgiver must require that reparation be made for every transgression, equal to the nature of the offence: but an act of rebellion against the authority of the lawgiver must incur the forfeiture of the life of the rebel, for which no other excellency of character can ever atone. Such is the state of man as a rebel against God; and though there may be, and doubtless are, different degrees of actual transgression, yet "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All are therefore under the law as transgressors. The first act of sin was an act of rebellion in casting off the authority of the Lawgiver, and has therefore subjected all to the curse and the forfeiture of life. This is an infinite debt, which we have no means, no ability, to pay; and ours is a state from which we have no ability to rescue ourselves by price or by power.

The righteous demand of the law of God is perfect obedience, in continuance and to the end; and for this most decisive reason, "that the law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 12.) But who is able to perform this for the time to come? The conscience of the sinner himself cannot but approve of the justice of the demand: yet who is able to render it? That, however, which it is just to demand, it is just to punish the violation of; and hence it is declared, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) And yet this is the state of every man; so "that every mouth must be stopped, and all the world stand guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) But the Law demands still more; not only obedience for the time to come, but entire satisfaction for past disobedience. This is equally just and unavoidable; for a righteous God can make no composition for the transgressions of his law, and a sinner can make no amends for his transgression. The most diligent attention for the time to come, attended with most exact obedience, so that no new debt might be contracted, will never be sufficient to atone for past offences. Such a mode of payment is not acknow-

ledged by the laws of men, and much less by the laws of God; so that perfect obedience for the time to come, must leave the past debt of sin yet the same. But even this obedience a sinful creature is wholly unable to render; and, as he cannot do this, the debt must be for ever increasing with an accumulation of guilt and danger. What can the miserable debtor to the justice of God expect, but that the law should take its course? He is now shut up, concluded by the Scripture under sin by the Law, and has nothing to expect but that the “adversary shall deliver him to the Judge, and the Judge deliver him to the officer,” to be shut up in the prison of hell, never to come out thence “till he has paid the uttermost farthing.” (Matt. v. 25, 26.) But a guilty sinner can pay this only by enduring the penalty in unceasing and everlasting misery—the death eternal.

This is indeed an awful view of the natural state of man as a sinner; but it is as true as it is awful; and the indifference of the world at large to these solemn considerations arises from ignorance, an ignorance which is produced by carelessness and inattention. Unwilling to discern or to believe the guilt and pollution of their state, they seldom give themselves an opportunity of hearing concerning it, much less of reflecting upon it; and resting in superficial views, they are but little affected with them. They reluctantly acknowledge that they are sinners, compelled by the plainest accusation of conscience, without at all considering what sin is, as a departure from God and a transgression of his holy law. Hence they make some general acknowledgment of Christ as the Saviour, without in the least considering what it was necessary for him to be and to do, in order to become the Saviour of sinners. They acknowledge his salvation to be excellent, without any knowledge of its nature, and in fact without any desire to know it. It cannot, therefore, be at all surprising, if, after such general and superficial acknowledgments, they still rest under the power of their sins, and in the guilt of their sins, satisfied with their sinful state, and without the gift and enjoyment of salvation. The pharisaical pride

of self-righteousness arises also from the same source, or from ignorance of that infinite debt which we owe to the law and justice of God. While there is but a slight sense of the evil and malignity of sin, as the transgression of a perfect, spiritual, and holy law; while insensible of the satisfaction which justice requires and must require, and which sinners can never give while insensible to the need of mercy, as a sovereign act of the Divine beneficence; men cannot but remain ignorant of their guilt and their helpless state. They fancy themselves to be rich and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing; when they are spiritually poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. They expect, vainly expect, by a few superficial services to make God their debtor, and to lay him under an obligation to bless and save them; or at least they are confident, that if they do their best, God must accept their imperfect, and (as they conceive) well-meant services. If in all this they have any regard to Christ as the Saviour, it is only that he may make up their deficiency, and so bring up the value of their services, if needful, to the demand of justice, by *his supplementary merits*.

As they feel but little need of the work of Christ by way of atonement, ransom, and redemption, so they but little prize his name, his condescension, or his grace. They call him, Lord and Saviour; but where is the disposition suitable to such as are looking to him alone for salvation? He is treated by them, as he was in the house of Simon the Pharisee, with cold respect. But all their confidence is in self: self is all they wish to depend upon for strength, for merit, or acceptance. Conscience may compel them, through a sense of deficiency, to look to him for some partial aid; but no further will they acknowledge their dependence upon him, nor look to him for grace and merit;—so far is He from being the only foundation of their hope, their only Saviour, their wisdom, their righteousness, their sanctification, and their redemption; so far is he from being all their salvation and all their desire. This, however, is not the plan of the Gospel, but the invention of human ignorance and pride.

In the Scripture plan of salvation a man is a lost and helpless sinner; and Jesus is the alone, the almighty Saviour, the fountain of pardoning mercy, of sanctifying grace, of redeeming power, and of all the blessings of salvation.

If, indeed, such be his state through sin, nothing but an act of sovereign grace can deliver him from it. The plan, or the Divine economy, which proposes to secure his salvation, must secure also a satisfaction to the law, an external honour to the government, and a full compensation to the justice, of an unchangeably holy God. But where is this plan to originate? and by whom are these important objects to be effected? None but an infinite person can pay an infinite debt: the plan must originate with him against whom we have offended, and the object must be effected by him who is equal in dignity and power. But can the sinner expect such grace as this? As he has destroyed himself, he might justly await the sentence: the sovereign Lord may deal with us as he pleases; and if he leave the sinner to perish, his justice, and even his goodness, stands unimpeached. But is not this grace the very subject of the Gospel message? Is not this the revealed plan of Divine mercy?—Let us take a view of the conduct of this immense Creditor towards such ruined and insolvent debtors, that we may properly estimate our debt of gratitude.

Instead of paying the last farthing, we are not able to pay the least mite. The debt we owe has exposed us to misery; “for the wages of sin is death;” but the rich free grace of the Lord our God is admirably summed up, in the language of the Redeemer himself, “When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all.” He freely devised the method of deliverance; he freely provided the necessary means; he graciously executed the necessary work, and he freely bestows the forgiving mercy. When man first became a sinner, God is represented as coming to inquire after his fallen creature; and calling him into his presence, by his voice of power, he demands, “Adam, where art thou?” But while the trembling rebel appears.

before him, he hears even then the tidings of pardoning mercy. (Gen. iii. 15.) He comes again into the world; but not to seize and arrest the guilty criminal; not to display the severity of his justice, or execute his righteous judgment; but, Oh infinite love! he comes in the very nature which had transgressed, to open the way for mercy, and to pay the debt of satisfaction; that he might have, as the Redeemer of his people, and according to the term of the covenant of redemption, the right and mediatorial authority to bestow the forgiveness of all their sins. The source of this is his own everlasting and unmerited love (Rom. xi. 5, 6; Eph. i. 4): the procuring cause is the work which in our nature he performed, considered as a ransom, an atonement, a propitiation, or a payment of our immense debt to Divine justice; (Rom. iii. 25, and Eph. i. 7); while the means of our enjoyment is in the exercise of repentance, and the simple exercise of faith. That such an offering should be appointed, should be accepted, and should be given in all its benefit to sinners, when without it no pardon could be dispensed consistently with the Divine perfection, is indeed an act of infinite grace. Surely never creditor besides dealt in such a manner with those who were indebted to him. How immense the sum he was called upon to pay, when the law was to be honoured by him, justice satisfied, and all the Divine perfections glorified! But he refused not the amazing undertaking; he withdrew not from the arduous work; he declines in no part of the immense sum which he had undertaken to pay, till he could say, "It is finished." "He loved his church, and gave *himself* for it;" a price beyond all computation, even to the infinite demands of law and justice. "He redeems his church unto God with his own blood:" his agony, his passion, his cross, his sufferings, and his death, are the price he paid to liberate and to save his people. Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable Gift! But, while these sufferings of the Redeemer are the means of our deliverance, his death the marvellous cause, and his atonement the ground, of our pardon and salvation, to us

the blessings come as the free gift of grace, without any regard to any righteousness, goodness, or merit in the creature. The enjoyment of them is not at all dependant upon any payment that sinners can make: they cost him dear, but to us they are the free grant of his good pleasure; and pardon, with all the blessings of salvation, is freely and fully offered and granted to all who come to him to take them, resting and presenting their claim upon the merit of his Cross. Let the convinced and fearful sinner hear and rejoice, while the Gospel publishes, in Christ Jesus, the free pardon of sin, of all sin, of whatever sin, except that which admits not of repentance and faith, and therefore excludes itself from mercy.

The Gospel is a continued proclamation of the name of the Lord; “Gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) It invites the trembling penitent: “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. lv. 6, 7.) Such also is its language to the returning backslider, who has forsaken the covenant of his God, who has slighted and abused his displays of mercy, and who has ungratefully forgotten and wickedly rebelled against the manifestation and enjoyment of his love. “Yet, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto the Lord thy God, though thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we again render the calves of our lips,” &c. “I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.” (Hos. xiv. 1—4, &c.) Sin is in itself an immense debt; and though there may, no doubt, be different degrees of practical guilt, yet every sin is a transgression of the good and holy law, and an act.

of rebellion against the good and holy God, arising from a state of mind in opposition and aversion to him. Whether then our practical guilt, as to the kind or number of our sins, be more or less, “*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and have nothing to pay towards the discharge of that debt which we have thereby contracted. We must therefore remain under the power of the law as transgressors, and subjected to its sentence, without redemption—a redemption which we cannot effect for ourselves, nor for others; for “no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.”

This is the case with debtors, under the charge of human law. The debt of a hundred will subject the unhappy object, to the consequences of his folly, as surely as the debt of ten thousand. But the pardon of sinners is an act of grace, of sovereign grace: “When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” “Behold,” says the Lord to Israel, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgression, and as a cloud thy sins:” and this is represented as the motive which ought to engage the heart to him: “therefore, return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.” “O, who is a God like unto thee!” (Jehovah the covenant God of Israel) “pardoning iniquity, and passing by the transgression of the remnant of thy heritage! who retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy.” (Micah vii. 18.) This is thine encouragement, poor sinner, to return to that God against whom thou hast offended. While “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin,” his love will surely apply its cleansing virtue, to every seeking and supplicating penitent. All sin shall be forgiven: the believing sinner shall be justified from all things: behold then, thou fearful trembling soul, the true and the secure source of thy encouragement. When the weeping Magdalene appeared at the feet of the Holy Jesus, he graciously and unreservedly pronounced, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” Not, If thou wilt do such and such things, thy sins shall then be forgiven; but the poor weeping penitent, sensible of her sin, and desirous of salvation,

experienced free and complete remission. So shall it be with thee, thou weeping penitent, appearing at the foot of the Throne, in supplicating posture, and with the prayer of faith. You find that you can do nothing to deserve or to acquire the blessing; every thing you have yet tried has, in your own opinion, only made you still worse; has aggravated your guilt, while it has added to your transgression; but come, take the blessing freely. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." There are none of the sons of men, but who need this forgiving mercy; and blessing and honour be unto the Lamb, who taketh away the sin of the world! None can need it too much: and as you never can make yourselves better, you need not wait to accomplish this vain attempt; but come as a sinner, sensible of sin, and desirous of pardon and deliverance; and believe his promise to the returning sinner; rejoice in the virtue of his Cross, his perfect atonement, in the merit of his everlasting righteousness, in the perfection of his propitiation, and the completeness of his finished work of redemption, and the blessing shall be yours. His blood will cleanse thy conscience, and his grace thine heart; for "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In judgment he will answer for thee, and will present thee before the throne, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. He promises, when he forgives, to remember thy sins no more; and through the virtue of his blood, and adorned with his righteousness, thou shalt stand complete and glorious in the sight of God for ever. Surely we must exclaim, "O Lord, thy ways, are not our ways, neither are thy thoughts our thoughts; but as the heavens are high above the earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts." O humble penitent, believe thy Saviour is all-sufficient, and that his mercy is suited to the extent of all thy wants. Thy God is faithful,

his promise is unbounded and unchanging: believe, and thou shalt rejoice; and thy joy neither life nor death, neither things present nor things to come, neither time nor eternity, shall take from thee.

Now then he becomes a Creditor in another view; and we become immense debtors, with a debt of gratitude, for his REDEEMING LOVE. We are not sufficiently sensible of our obligations, or we should say with the Apostle, "THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US." His love to us is a breadth, a length, a depth, a height, which passeth all understanding; a mystery which angels will never comprehend, and which eternity can never fully unfold. Never shall we know the debt we owe, and never shall we be able to discharge it; yet it is here the happiness of the believer, to be always paying that which will never be paid. To say we owe him our all, is to say indeed but little: surely we "are not our own, since we are bought with such a price, that we might glorify God in our body and in our spirits, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) His tender mercies should constrain us to give up ourselves a living sacrifice, well pleasing to God in Christ. (Rom. xii. 1.) This is the most effectual means of increasing our love and our evangelical obedience; for the more we see the love of his heart, and experience the love of his forgiveness, we shall love him more, constrained to love him, because he hath first and so loved us.

Here then we have subjects of the most interesting consideration. Let us frequently contemplate the debt we owe to God, our Creator and Preserver: here is a debt of obligation which we have never paid, and which as sinners we never can. Let us frequently contemplate the debt of satisfaction which we owe to that law which we have broken, and to the government and justice of that God against whom we have rebelled. These are the most just debts which ever were or ever can be demanded; and yet here we are insolvent, and have nothing to pay,—not only, not a little, but absolutely nothing. When considering

our miserable and wretched state in consequence of this, let us turn our attention to study his own plan of mercy, and view his love in its origin, its undertaking, and in all its various displays, till brought into our heart, in the power of his forgiving mercy. When we consider from what he has redeemed us, even from sin and hell, and the manner by which he has effected that redemption, by the blood of his Cross, we must be lost in wonder and astonishment.

“Praise, flow for ever, if astonishment will give thee leave,
My praise for ever flow,” &c.

For this he left his throne of glory, humbled himself and became of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant; for this he endured disgrace, dishonour, infamy, and agony, and in the likeness of man, humbled himself, even to the death of the cross. His blood is the price of our redemption; his curse, our deliverance from the curse; his satisfaction to justice, our salvation from its righteous demands; and his agony and bloody sweat, our ransom from the debt of sin, and the pain and prison of hell. Let us then warm our hearts in holy contemplation, at this fire of Divine love. And may some live coal from this altar of the Cross inflame our hearts, and kindle the sacred fire there, which never shall be quenched again, but burn throughout eternity, with an increasing flame of Divine and grateful ardour!

While the self-righteous Pharisee can bear the wonderful relation of the love of Jesus, with a heart cold and unaffected; the penitent jailor, the convicted Jews, the weeping Magdalene, and the regenerated Saul, and those like them, will welcome the free grace and mercy of the Saviour; will adore and love him, and manifest the gracious effect in returns of gratitude and love; and for this simple reason, that where much is given they will love much. It is indeed the effect of ignorance of our state, and of his salvation, if we are not equally affected with these considerations. If a sinner be saved solely by the sovereign grace of the Father, through the boundless love of the Son, by the gracious influence of the Spirit, which

is indeed the fact ; that any saved sinner does not feel the infinite obligation he is under, can only arise from his not perceiving the state he was in, and the method and the extent of his deliverance.

“ Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh ;” but “ to Him who died for us and rose again.” Never can we render an equal return for such unequalled love ; but let us aim to do all we can, all the powers of body and soul, the employment of our time, the exercise of our talents, all the abilities which we possess are now doubly his ; his by Creation, and his as acquired anew, by the *right of redemption*. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, the Apostle counted all things but loss ; and freely suffered the loss of all things to win Christ and be found in him. Besides him he would comparatively know nothing ; and to testify of his grace he accounted not *his life dear to him*. Similar views will produce similar effects : the Gospel presents the same views to the believing mind ; and faith embraces them as there revealed, while the heart of the penitent sinner rejoices in them. His love is still the same, and every saved sinner is under the same forcible obligation to love and obey, to serve and to glorify, that Saviour in whom alone is salvation.

Inquire then, my soul, what can I do to serve him ; how shall I best honour his name and promote his cause in the world ; in what way can I make him honourable and precious in the eyes of my fellow-sinners, and give to him the glory which is due unto his name ? I will ever be paying the debt which never can be paid ; and I will rejoice to be paying it still, throughout eternity. It is not the debt of satisfaction to the law and justice I have to pay ; no, that I must for ever have despaired to accomplish. But, blessed be his Name, that He has effected himself ; and mine is only the debt of gratitude for such infinite compassion : it is the debt of love for pardon free and full ; for salvation freely obtained, freely given, and given for eternity, never to be revoked. “ Bless the Lord then,

O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases!" (Psa. ciii. 1, &c.) Having much forgiven, let me love much. Eternity will increase the debt of gratitude; and everlasting songs and everlasting services shall celebrate his eternal love.

ESSAY VIII.

Hiding-Place — Covert.

THERE is nothing which can be more gratifying than a consciousness of security in the midst of apparent danger. To hear the storm all around us, while we are placed in a situation of shelter where we do not feel it, and are free from all apprehension of injury from it; from a sentiment of sympathy for those who are exposed to its fury, united with self-gratulation on our own safety, affords a most delightful sensation, which is better conceived than expressed. Such is the consciousness of the believer in the exercise of faith: Jesus is a Hiding-Place, a Covert, a Refuge, from the blasts of every storm: faith brings the believing sinner under his shelter, and in proportion as the confidence of faith reposes in the all-sufficiency of his power and the faithfulness of his word, in the midst of trials or dangers the believing mind has peace and rest. The believer calmly asks, who or what can now injure me, beneath the eye, or in the arms, or under the wings of the Almighty Jesus? Such a title represents him to the mind of the sinner, exposed to the consequences of sin in such a world as this, in a character most admirably suited to his state and to his wants. He who feels the dangers of his earthly pilgrimage, throughout this dreary and stormy desert, will see the need of such a protection and defence; and he who feels his need, will rejoice to fly beneath its security. And such is Jesus to the believing sinner; “The Hiding-Place from the wind, the Covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Isa. xxxii. 2.) The force of this metaphor would be better understood in

those climates which are exposed to the most destructive storms and tempests. It is no uncommon thing for travellers passing through the deserts of Egypt or Arabia, to meet with winds by which the whole desert is put into commotion: even whole armies have been sometimes lost beneath the mountains of burning sand, thus heaped upon them. How pleasant, in such a state of danger, to behold some refuge on an eminence, to which the agitated traveller might fly, and find protection! If the allusion be made to the stormy sea, how pleasant, when the storm and tempest are raging, to behold them only at a distance, in some secure harbour and haven of rest; or to be able to fly from their commencing rage, to some such place of shelter! Such is Jesus to the mariner over the stormy sea of life, to the pilgrim through his desert wilderness. In this Hiding-Place no enemies can injure; within this Covert no storm can reach: under this Mount extended through the wilderness, the weary traveller may pass on at ease: and let the raging tempest blow, here is security; and, to the believing mind, rest and peace.

Man as a sinner, in this sinful world, where every thing is under the effects of sin, finds himself continually surrounded with storms and dangers. Separated from the favour of his great Creator, he is exposed to all the effects of his departure; for a creature needs no more, but to be left to himself to become miserable. Sin, however, has done more; it has subjected him to the indignation of a holy God, and the curse of death: "Sin therefore having entered into the world, death has entered by sin," with all the misery which leads to it; "and so death passeth upon all men, because all are sinners." In this state he finds himself exposed,

1. *To the storms of a violated Law.*—As long as man is a sinner, the Law will stand forth against him, and denounce its curse: it admits of nothing but perfect, constant, and continued obedience; and receives not any of our vain excuses for the palliations arising from infirmity, or fallen nature. It declares, "He

that doeth these things shall live in them ;” but, “ *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.*” But who is there that “ doeth good and sinneth not ?” Here there needs no evidence but a man’s own conscience, which reminds him of ten thousand transgressions of the Divine precept. The sentence of the Law, when heard in a convinced conscience, is like the thunder of Mount Sinai, amidst which the holy precepts were given which made the Israelites to tremble. These indeed were intended as a figure and representation of the terrors which strike the guilty sinner, when its holiness and severity are revealed to the heart : “ And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoaking : and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” (Exod. xx. 18, 19.)

2. Hence arise *the storms of guilty fears, in an accusing conscience from a conviction of the guilt and danger of sin.*—When the Spirit of God enlightens the mind and reveals, to the before insensible and therefore careless sinner, the purity and spirituality of the Law, the extent of its precepts, and the justice of its sentence, he sees the gathering storm collecting all around him, and it drives him out of all his vain refuges of lies and dark hiding places of self-confidence. What awful discoveries does the light of truth make to his heart ! It shews him that his former righteousness was but as filthy rags, his good works but specious sins, and his merits a mere deceit. He laughed and trifled before in the ways of iniquity ; but now he trembles, and is afraid. He feels his state, and fears his danger ; for he beholds the awful fact, that he is a sinner against God, and is convinced of the guilt of his transgression : wherever he looks, he finds no shelter. If he looks to God, against him he has offended, broken his law, dishonoured his government, and provoked his jus-

tice. If he looks into himself, his flattering ideas of excellency are vanished, and he sees nothing but sin and pollution. All around him, the creatures of God seem armed to avenge the quarrel of their Lord; all nature is hostile to the rebel against the God of nature; the storm of wrath hangs blackening and ready to fall in a destructive tempest on his soul; and justice is pursuing, and can be appeased by nothing but death. What misery can equal the apprehension of a soul trembling under the wrath of God! an immortal soul fitted for the enjoyment of God in its capacity and powers, but unfitted in its temper and disposition by sin, and ready to perish everlastingly! But lo, here is the glory of Christ our Redeemer. In the title and character which he here bears, he is suited to our necessity, dangers, and evils. Yes, all his names are names of love, and assumed in correspondence with some of our wants and fears. He is a Physician, because we are sick; He is a Preserver, because we are helpless; He is All-glorious, because we are vile; He is a Treasure, because we are poor; He is a Refuge, because we are exposed to the wind and tempest: in a word, He is a Saviour, because we are sinners. He is unchangeable in all, because we are so unstable; He is an everlasting Saviour, and his salvation is everlasting, because we have immortal souls, that will eternally need his salvation. As his characters are thus suited to our need, so it is only a sense of need which will lead us to him. If we are not convinced that such is our state, we shall never value his salvation, nor fly to him as our refuge. Therefore, the word of God so constantly, and so solemnly declares to us our guilt and danger, and insists upon the necessity of such a Saviour. It tells us, that the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise of grace might be given in Christ Jesus alone: and when this is really believed, the consciousness of guilt and the fear of wrath justly deserved, make the Saviour precious to the view of faith. The carelessness of men arises from unbelief: but, alas! little will it avail us that we have shut our eyes upon our true

state, when the great day shall reveal it, and when we must stand in our true character before the throne of God. Better is it now to stand convicted in our own conscience, and to judge and condemn ourselves, that, flying to the refuge of the Gospel, we may not be judged of the Lord, nor condemned with the world. In such a state of self-conviction and self-condemnation, the suitableness and the excellency of Jesus are discovered in his character, as the Hiding-Place from the wind, and Covert from the tempest : amidst these storms of guilt and wrath, the atoning Saviour, the all-righteous Advocate, becomes our hope. In his atonement, in his perfect righteousness, in the merit of his cross and precious blood, and in the propitiation of his death, we find our deliverance, because we find the sure ground of our pardon, justification, and redemption.

This he is peculiarly as a man, though not simply as a man ; for his Divine nature gives dignity and merit to his human sufferings and obedience, though it was only in human nature that he could suffer and obey. It was for this purpose that he became a man, that he humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man ; that he took upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham ; that he might be made under the law to redeem us ; that he might become an offering and a sacrifice to God, and perfect the propitiation in his blood. “ By his one offering, therefore, he hath perfected for ever them which are sanctified : ” and now in our nature he ever lives to plead for, to rule, and to save his redeemed people. As the King and the Priest he sits upon the throne, to govern and to intercede, and to confirm the counsel of peace for ever. (Isa. xxxii. 1 ; Zech. vi. 13.) Does not this view of the blessed Jesus afford a shelter to the believing mind from the storms of the fiery law, and from the tempest of a guilty and accusing conscience ? O sinner, in the extremity of thy fear, adore and trust the blessed Jesus, and believe, and in calm reliance repose thyself in him, who proposes himself to thee as thy Refuge from all, in his law-fulfilling righteousness, and in his law-honouring death by his cross

and passion. To a perishing sinner, the whole creation can offer nothing but dismay and terror wherever he turns ; but His watchmen cry aloud to the trembling penitent, Come to Christ, come freely ; come with direct application, without fear ; come boldly, for in Him is thy sure refuge. When his blood is sprinkled upon the conscience, when his righteousness clothes the soul by faith, the terrors of the Law give way to the hope of salvation, the storms of guilt yield to the tranquillizing prospect of pardon and acceptance ; the sword of justice cannot reach thee in this sanctuary ; the storm shall only waft thee in this ark over the sea of life to the haven of eternal glory.—Do not hesitate to shelter thyself here. If the Law charge thee with having no merit nor worthiness, but as being all guilt and defilement, here no merit is required ; the Law as to its sentence, its wrath and curse, is abrogated, lost in the love of Christ ; for “ there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” A holy God is no longer on a throne of wrath, but a throne of grace : he no longer reveals himself as the righteous Judge, but as “ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.” He is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and that which has reconciled God unto sinners should reconcile sinners unto God. “ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and his righteousness justifieth from all things : what, then, can the penitent need more ? Here seek and find thy shelter and thy refuge, thou guilty penitent ; and let thy tongue break forth in the song of rapture, gratitude, and praise, safe lodged beneath the shelter, and in the pavilion of thy Redeemer’s grace and power.

But as the believer passes on in his passage through the wilderness, other storms often meet him,

3. *Raised by the malice of his enemies in the violence of temptations*, which rouse his inward corruption, darken his shining prospects, interrupt the light of God’s countenance, excite the fears of his displeasure, and destroy his peace.—Such a storm the Psalmist met with, when, in the

bitterness of his soul he cried out, “ Hear my prayer, O God! and give ear to my supplications : in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness: and enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.” (Ps. cxliii. 1—3.) “ Hear me speedily, O Lord. My spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them which go down into the pit.” (ver. 7.) See the whole of this beautiful Psalm, so suitable in its strain of sorrow to the state, and therefore frequently upon the lips, of the tried and tempted believer.

When the power of unbelief prevails in the mind, darkening the evidences of the word of God, weakening the conviction of his truth, the faithfulness of his promise, and the certainty of his salvation; when hard thoughts of God, or blasphemous ideas are injected into the imagination; when corrupt lusts assail the heart, weakening the exercise of faith and love, and beclouding the prospect that before delighted the soul, like the strong wind or the stormy tempest;—these agitate and distress the believer, and threaten him with impending destruction. There are some indeed who seem to have no idea of such a state of the believer: they are favoured with feeling but little of the Christian warfare through opposing corruption, and therefore go on in peace and comfort. They have formed to themselves a beautiful image of the life of a Christian, and its growth from grace to grace; an image which is true in the abstract, were the life of grace considered independent of its present opposition from remaining corruption, both from within and from without. They would not derogate from the power and influence of the grace of the Spirit, which indeed can do all things; and therefore they cannot conceive how a believer can be left in such a state as this. It is true indeed that grace shall triumph over all corruption in the end; and it is equally true that it will not leave the believer under the power of any by the way: but we know

not to what extent he may be suffered to feel the assault of the enemy, and the body of sin and death ; nor how long he may be left to strive and combat in the apparently uncertain conflict. The question is not what grace can do, but what in the present state it actually does, in the mind and heart of the children of God. Grace, as to spiritual understanding, could enlighten the mind, and give a most perfect knowledge of Divine truth, without a doubt, hesitation, or perplexity ; but in the present state, we know it does not effect this. Grace, as to sanctification, could purify the heart from all remains of corruption, so as that it should no more assault or distress ; but we know that in the present state its being is not taken away, though its power and the love of it are destroyed,—a circumstance which often makes the believer to feel more of its distressing influence. But those who are unexercised themselves with temptation can form no idea of the believer's state, when prostrating himself before the throne of God, in the agony of his soul, which can neither tolerate the iniquity which it feels, nor bear up under it, nor deliver itself from its urgent solicitations. All thy waves and thy billows, says the believer, are rolling over me. In some Christians, the exercise of grace forms a beautiful character displayed in actual graces of proportion and order ; while in others, the exercise of the same grace is employed in overcoming the opposing power of corruption ; in striving, praying, and wrestling, to prevent being foiled and thrown down by it into actual transgression, which the soul abhors. This may indeed arise, and it is worth while to inquire how far it does arise, from a corrupt imagination formerly permitted to run wild in the fields of fancy, and which now almost involuntarily, or at least without permission, will be wandering in the same enchanted ground ; or from some former indulgences, in a state of nature, of corrupt affections, and which will crave the gratification which the renewed heart condemns. It may not, however, arise from either of these causes, nor be promoted by any of these neglects. This sorrow may be increased by want of diligent attention

to the appointed means of deliverance, as to the earnest prayer of faith, or to the ordinances of God; or by want of simple dependence on the grace and power of the Saviour; or from the permission granted to the great enemy to assault and distress, though in the hand of Him who can say, "Hitherto thou shalt go, and no farther." The present state is but preparatory to the state of unmixed purity and joy, and may be mingled more or less with the scenes of conflict, as the great Disposer of all things may appoint in his sovereign pleasure. The believer, however, is assured of support and preservation by the way, and of eternal victory in the end; for Jesus is his Hiding-Place and his Covert.

But should all these storms of inward trial be escaped, or but slightly experienced, there are seasons which must necessarily occur, in the progress of this mortal life, which will try the faith, exercise the patience, and require all the support of the Gospel. The various storms of trial, and the tempests of affliction, must come on all. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward:" the light of life is disappointment, vexation, and dissatisfaction. Here roses grow on thorns, and the honey-bee wears a sting. The best and most happy estate of man is embittered by the thoughts of uncertainty, while the general mass of human life is trial and perplexity. But if the losses and crosses of common life are kindly moderated, or cheerfully sustained, disease and affliction must bring up the train of human sorrows; and we know not which of the many, or how many of the various diseases which sin has introduced into the human frame, may fall on us: soon one or more of them must, in its season, bring us to death; for "it is appointed unto all men once to die." How much does the prospect alarm the trembling mind! but what, then, must be the reality? To part with all below in which our delight and joy have centred; to go, we know not where; to change the present mode of living, and to live we know not how, are thoughts full of serious, important, and very interesting apprehension.

But what gives solemnity to the whole is that,

4. *After death comes judgment.*—There the sinner expects, and justly expects, to realize all his guilty dread; to meet an angry God, the sentence of the Law, the wages of sin. This is a storm indeed, which shall sweep all the ungodly into hell, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. There every unsheltered soul shall perish; nor can the mount or the rock, to which they are represented as seeking, protect them from the wrath of God. In this tremendous storm of Divine justice and indignation must my soul perish without an Almighty Refuge. To this all are exposed: yes, the most careless and secure must pass through it, and must be overwhelmed by it without the protecting Covert of Almighty Power. But Jesus, the man, the God-man, is the Deliverer which the Gospel exhibits.—Has he then power, and grace, and wisdom, and love, to protect and save in and through all? what a suitableness, what a glory, what a preciousness, in his character to the faith of the believer! Yes, he is the Hiding-Place from the wind, and the Covert from every tempest. The storm, the wind, and the tempest, seem to imply that he is the protection of his people in all their troubles both great and small, in the furious tempest, as well as in the less agitating though stormy wind. In every evil, in the greatest evils, yea, in all the evils of life, death, or judgment, his almighty power surrounding can protect and save. Sin alone is the cause of evil, and therefore the cause of fear; and it is, while resting upon the soul, a just cause of the greatest fear. The man who is under the power and guilt of sin, and yet does not fear, is infatuated. But, if sin be done away, the cause being removed, the effects must follow; and it is the glory of Jesus, that he first saves his people from their sins, and then delivers from the wrath to come.—But here we must stand to adore and bless his Name, in the recollection, that the storms from which he shelters us, as man, God-man, he bore himself; he opposed his almighty power between us and them, and thus affords us the shelter of his

shade. When he atoned for sin, he stood like a great mountain, like the Rock of Ages, to bear the storm and beating tempest, the scorching sun of Divine indignation: and, where we should have been blown away like chaff, he stood immoveable. And now he stands as the shadow of a great rock in this weary land, extending through all the wilderness. The weary travellers walk all the way through, from earth to heaven, under his shelter, unless they step aside into the way of sin. He affords his safe protecting shade, and will shelter his people all through to the land of promise. The raging tempest shall fly over them, but their souls shall be at peace in him. The shelter and secure covert of his people through the wilderness, is, his infinite and unerring wisdom, uniting with his almighty power; yea, all the fulness of his Divine perfections, for “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii. 9.) We may well unite these together, because their union is the safety, the glory, and the joy of his people. Hence he is able to defend them against all their enemies, to protect them amidst the storms of temptation and of affliction, to be their preserver in death, and their defence in judgment. His infinite wisdom knows how to baffle all the designs of their enemies, and his almighty power how to resist and counteract their rage. He is able, therefore, to lead them through all to the inheritance above. “Count it all joy,” said the Apostle, “when ye fall into divers temptations.” (James i. 2.) The precept can never be understood but by the believer; for it is faith in an almighty, invisible Preserver, that alone can enable him to obey it. But if we have a friend whose eye is always upon us, whose infinite wisdom is engaged, and whose almighty arm of power is exerted, for our direction and defence, then the precept is reasonable and intelligible. This made the saints of old rejoice, who had in themselves nothing more to trust to; whose natures were not less evil, nor their temptations and enemies less powerful; but who in faith realized and exercised a full reliance on the power and promise of Jehovah the Redeemer. “God,” say they,

“is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” (Psa. xlvi. 1, 2.) This made the Apostle glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him, when assured by him that his grace was sufficient for him. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) In that awful moment, when earthly friends recede for ever; when standing by the bed of death, they can have no communication with the departing spirit, the presence of Jesus can quiet and protect the soul: and when it enters naked into the world of spirits, he can shelter it in his arm from every infernal spirit, and convey it to the realms of bliss. This made the Psalmist rejoice: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psa. xxiii. 4.) Jesus is still the same to his people as he was to his servants of old; unchangeable in the virtue of his atonement for their pardon and acceptance, and in his Divine perfection for their guidance and protection. In him is all we want and all we can desire. The faith, indeed, of his people is variable; and therefore the experience of his grace, and the joy of his salvation, are the same. The difference between one believer and another is only this, that the one realizes more than another, in the exercise of faith, the person, work, grace, freeness, and fulness of the Saviour; and has therefore more joy, more peace, and consequently more gratitude and heavenly love. This is the natural result and the promised effect of the faith of reliance; for “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.” (See Isa. xxvi. 1—4; xxvii. 2, 3; xii. 1—3.)

The believer also finds his covert,

In the everlasting, unchanging, covenant grace and love of his Redeemer, which secures the exercise of all his abilities for his salvation.—This the Apostle lays down as the great ground of consolation, provided by a covenant God for his people: “God, willing more abundantly to shew

unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." (Heb. vi. 16—20.) In the counsels of eternity, the eternal Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, laid the admirable, the inconceivable, plan of redemption: the infinite wisdom, love, and power of our Jesus, as revealed in human nature, executed the wonderful design; and in his unchanging love and power he now calls by his Spirit all his redeemed to himself, brings them into the experience of his grace, and will bring them to the full enjoyment of his glory. Notwithstanding their depraved state by nature; notwithstanding the power of their corruptions; notwithstanding the assaults of enemies, and every opposition; notwithstanding every charge of the law or justice; notwithstanding frailties, temptations, and falls, he will accomplish his design of everlasting love. "I am Jehovah," saith he; "I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Your unworthiness, O penitent sinners, shall not change the purpose of his love; for he saw the whole extent of it in eternity, when he laid the plan of redemption: he saw it all, when on the cross he gave himself for you, and poured out his blood to atone for it. He sees it now on the throne, only to pardon, to heal, and save, when laid in sorrow at his feet. In all your afflictions he will shelter you from their curse; in death he will be your refuge; and, when entering the eternal world, your protecting Friend: Then, when you appear before God in judgment, he who assumes the throne will manifest himself as your Saviour rather than your Judge: He will answer for you, you shall know what is included in the grace of him who delivereth us from the wrath to come; yea, he shall present you, and all his church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, eternally accepted in himself!

How great the folly of a careless ungodly world! amidst such scenes of danger, such tempests of guilt and wrath, to neglect the only Shelter, the only Covert that can protect in time or in eternity! Sinner, whatever be thy hope, whatever be thy refuge, thy righteousness, thy goodness,

or thy innocence, it is but a deceitful hiding place. Afflictions must come: they are the consequences of sin: death, you know, is coming, and judgment must follow. What will you do in the day of wrath? Now you may trifle, or be presumptuous; but then you can neither evade his eye, or his wrath, nor resist nor escape his arm. When he pours out the flood of Divine indignation, if you are not sheltered in his love, if he does not shelter you by his power, the highest hiding-place, will not secure you from the rising tide: rest not, therefore, O sinner, till you find your rest in Christ Jesus. Blessed be God, he is the Ark, and yet the door is open; enter, and the storm shall only waft thee over the sea of life; shall bring thee round to the haven of rest: and there He will be thy eternal Refuge.

The shelter which he affords to his people is sometimes represented by the hen gathering her brood under her wings. (Matt. xxiii. 37: so Isa. xxxi. 5.) As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending, he will also deliver it, and passing over, he will preserve it. There seems to be an allusion to this, in the form of the cherubim stretching their wings over the ark, while the four faces looked down with complacency upon it. Here the lion, the emblem of the Son, was always united with the face of the man. Here we see how a man is the Hiding-Place and Refuge of his people; viz. the God-man, Immanuel, the man taken into union with the second person in the Divine essence, as man performing all the necessary work of suffering and obedience, as God giving dignity, merit, and virtue to this, and possessing almighty power to bring into effect the purposes of his grace. What a delightful character of Jesus is this! Here let me rest for ever under the shelter of his wings. “Be merciful unto me, O God! be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until this calamity be overpast,” &c. (Psa. lvii. 1—3.) “O thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth. Turn us again, O God;” and as thou didst illuminate the faces of the cherubic hieroglyphic, so cause thy face

to shine, in manifestations of thy favour, “and we shall be saved.” (Psal. lxxx. 1—3.) “Come, my people,” says the compassionate Redeemer, “enter thou into thy chambers,” these chambers of refuge in the love of Jesus, “and shut thy doors about thee: and hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Isa. xxvi. 20.) It is the duty, as well as the privilege of the penitent sinner in time of danger, in every time of danger, and in all dangers, to fly hither. “Yet will I look again,” said the overwhelmed Prophet, in the belly of the fish, “yet will I look again to thy holy temple,” where the refuge of thy people is emblematically represented. (Jonah ii. 4.)

In times of danger, when storms return, and tempests begin to blow, the fearful traveller immediately runs to a place of covert, if it be near. Why then should not the trembling sinner, and the fearful believer, thus readily fly to the refuge of the Gospel, the shelter of the Saviour's love? He invites thee into the ark of safety: He bids thee fly from the storm to the covert of his wing, to the protection of his arm, to the pavilion of his everlasting love. Fly, tempted believer, to him who was in all things tempted as thou art, though without sin: fly, weak and helpless believer, to Him who is the Mighty One, the Lord Jehovah, upon whom thy help is laid, and who condescended to be thy righteousness and thy strength. “Come unto me,” says the Saviour, “all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—Here, believer, take shelter and realize thy security. When the wintry storms are raging, when the rain descends amidst the blowing tempest, how do we congratulate ourselves by our fire-sides, in a well-built habitation, where we are in safety and at ease. So may the believer rejoice in Christ Jesus. Do not acknowledge then, that safety is in Christ, and forget the application, but believe and trust in him for yourself: rest on his promise as a returning sinner, and then it shall be yours: then may you say, He is mine, and I have all in Him. Improve this knowledge of Christ, by having recourse to him daily. As fresh trials arise, of whatever

nature, or whatever degree, exercise faith in Jesus, dwell upon his promises, bring them into use, and live upon them. Then, though in yourself you see nothing but guilt, and apprehend nothing but danger, you may glory in Christ Jesus: He is the refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in every time of trouble; and “they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” (Psal. ix. 9, &c.) Still you may boast, “The Eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them” (Deut. xxxiii. 27): yea, the man Christ Jesus, the God-man, Immanuel, will be the hiding-place from the wind, the covert from the tempest, till landed safe beyond every storm of a sinful world, in his immediate presence, in his kingdom of glory everlasting. There no sin shall enter; and therefore no storm nor tempest shall blow, but eternal security, and eternal peace, shall be the inheritance of all the redeemed.

ESSAY IX.

Cyrus.

CYRUS, the king of Persia and the conqueror of Babylon, was one of the most illustrious persons whose names are recorded in sacred or profane history. God himself put an honour upon him, such as he has not given to any other, in foretelling him by name, nearly two hundred years before his birth, as the great deliverer of his Israel from their seventy years' captivity. The various circumstances recorded of him, and the various predictions concerning him, which were so minutely fulfilled, discover to us, most distinctly, the infinite wisdom, the fore-knowledge, and the pre-determination of Jehovah; his absolute direction of, and controul over, the actions of men in general, and even of the mighty conquerors, in the freest exercises of their wills, and in the execution of their ambitious plans of conquest and destruction. We see how easily he turns, or works with, their corrupted passions, to fulfil his own purposes in the destruction of his enemies, or in his care over, and preservation of, his people. These, however, are not the precise views which must occupy our attention, while we consider Cyrus in those respects in which he was an eminent type of Christ. This he most certainly was designed to be; for the prophecies which related to him were so delivered as evidently to have a further allusion. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon was an emblem of the great redemption of Messiah; and the various prophetic descriptions of it gave occasion to the Holy Spirit of Prophecy to exalt the glory of Christ Jesus. While the name of Cyrus sounds upon the lips of the Prophet, or stands recorded in the sacred pages, and

the literal circumstance of the prophecy might have its fulfilment in him, it is plain that the mind of the Prophet is carried far beyond all earthly subjects, and that the glory of the great Redeemer was the first and foremost in his thoughts, and in the design of the Holy Spirit. While thus elevated beyond the type to the Antitype, there are many passages which can only apply to Him, describing the glories of his person, the splendour of his spiritual victories, and the blessings of his salvation. The consideration of a few of these parallel circumstances may excite and increase our faith and love to our great Deliverer, a greater than Cyrus,—our Almighty and Everlasting Redeemer.

If we compare together the testimony of sacred and profane history, we shall discover a remarkable concurrence of facts, which the designs and purposes of God revealed so long before, by the Prophet, as to countries at that time little known, and as to a person altogether unknown, to himself and his people. We shall be led to observe how the predicted instrument of Israel's deliverance was wonderfully fitted for the purpose, by his natural character, his education, and his habits. He appears from his birth to have been a child possessed of a peculiar disposition, and of most astonishing parts; and to have been thrown by the providence of God into a peculiar system of education, calculated to promote a hardiness of nature, and to excite the passion for glorious achievements. And in his first entrance upon the scene of action, by a succession of favourable and unexpected circumstances, he was prepared for, and led to conceive and to undertake, the vast project of the conquest of Babylon, the mightiest empire in the world, and was conducted to its consummation by the immediate hand of God. The words of the prophetic writer which hath foretold all these events, delivered probably to him by the Prophet Daniel, and which had then taken place exactly as they were foretold, might make on his mind the first favourable impression, as to the then little and dispersed nation of the

Jewish people; and produce, together with the Divine influence, the fixed determination to become their deliverer. In some of these circumstances we may trace the likeness to our mighty Redeemer, and then contemplate his infinite superiority in all.

1. Cyrus was appointed, by his birth, in the counsels of God, *as the deliverer of Israel*.—While profane history relates the various circumstances which refer to the different persons who have been the mighty conquerors or the great deliverers of nations, the scourges or the benefactors of mankind, the Bible gives us an account of those persons only, or of those circumstances, which in some way or other have a connexion with the designs of God towards his church and people, or the accomplishment of his great promise in the coming of Messiah. This view may account for the introduction of many things which appear to us at first sight unimportant; and for the omission of others which, in our view, and in the usual estimate of human affairs, are considered of the greatest consequence. In this light we must look upon every character and every event there recorded; even Cyrus, the conqueror of the kingdom of Babylon, the golden head of empires (Dan. ii. 38), would have found no mention there, had it not been for his connexion with Israel; and as a most glorious type of Him of whom it is the very Spirit of Prophecy to bear testimony. It is wholly on this account that such frequent and such honourable mention is made of him. He is introduced to our notice in this solemn manner, and the reason is given for it in the close of the prediction:—“Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am Jehovah, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself, &c.: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” (Isa. xlv. 24—28.) “Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus; whose right hand I have holden, to subdue

nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates ; and the gates shall not be shut : I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know, that I the Lord, who call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name : I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." (Isa. xlv. 1—4.) How exactly every circumstance corresponds with the prediction, in its minutest parts, his own historian informs us, though ignorant of the prediction itself*. He is here introduced as Jehovah's anointed, and his shepherd for the deliverance of Israel ; after some of the most glorious predictions, or in the midst of some of the most glorious promises, of the person and triumph of the Redeemer : as though the Lord would direct his people to him, as the type of this event, and as a pledge by the way of its final accomplishment. In Cyrus behold the eminent type, and in his unprecedented victories the certainty, of his everlasting triumph. Throughout the whole of this prediction, we behold the mind of the Prophet led far beyond the temporal deliverer, and using a language which, though in a subordinate sense, may be understood of him, yet, in its fullest meaning, can be referred to no one but the Lord our Redeemer. The promises connected may be true, in an inferior view, of both ; but more eminently, and in their completeness, only in the great Antitype : or rather, I apprehend, some few circumstances are introduced in this extended prophecy, as to the deliverance from Babylon, as a pledge of the spiritual deliverance of the church ; while the real subject is Messiah's victories, and the church's deliverance and triumph in him. The final accomplishment of the prophecy stated in the beginning of it, is the revealing the glory of Jehovah, till all flesh shall see it toge-

* See Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, book vii. §§ 23—25.

ther. (Isa. xl. 5.) The coming of Jehovah, as the Shepherd of his flock (ver. 11, &c.); as the Servant of Jehovah, to bring judgment to the Gentiles. (xlii. 1—4.) The great blessing is forgiveness of sins, and spiritual and eternal redemption. (xliii. 25; xliv. 21—23.) To Him the nations are invited to look for salvation, for righteousness, for strength. (xlv. 22—25.) These are circumstances immediately connected with the mention of Cyrus and his victories; but in the following chapters, or from the forty-ninth, the type is altogether lost in the Antitype: Cyrus and Babylon seem to come no more into remembrance, but the Servant of the Lord, the Preserver of Israel, the Light of the Gentiles, the suffering, dying, rising, reigning Saviour. (See especially xlix. 5—12; liii. liv. to the end.)

The parallel circumstances may, however, here be traced with much profit. If Cyrus was fore-appointed as the deliverer of Israel; if he was the anointed king of Jehovah, in an accommodated view, and the shepherd of his flock; so Jesus was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, though manifested in these last times for us, as the Messiah, eminently the Anointed One, the sum of all anointings, the good Shepherd of his church. We are directed to look back into the counsels of eternity, and behold the essential Word and Wisdom of Jehovah, “set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was,” and having then “his delights with the sons of men.” (Prov. viii. 22—31.) Then the great plan of redeeming love was laid: then he undertook to be the Seed of the woman, that he might be the plague of death, the conqueror of the grave, the destruction of the destroyer. Then, as the Lamb slain, in the Divine counsels and appointment, before the foundation of the world, he was set forth as the Propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of our sins, &c.; made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to his people; to whom also it was well pleasing that in him all fulness should dwell. In him his people were chosen, to be holy and without blame before him in

love, predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, that they might be accepted in the beloved; having redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph. i. 4—8.) This is the glory of our Redeemer; thus from everlasting to everlasting he is the same,—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” How great the encouragement of the returning penitent who comes to the Throne of Grace in him! How faithful the security, and how firm the confidence, of the believer, who rests his soul and all his hopes upon this Saviour and mighty Redeemer of sinful men! But still further,

2. In accomplishing the designs of God, *Cyrus was led forth by him, guided and upheld by his hand, and strengthened and girded by his power.* (Isa. xlv. 1, 5, 13.)

—The history which is transmitted to us of this very extraordinary person is so particular, as that it seems providentially designed to illustrate the prophetic declaration: We see the conqueror led on, from step to step; the accomplishment of one project opening the way to another design which was before entirely unthought of; till, in a regular progression, he had unintentionally, and without any previous expectation of the succession of events, or the final issue, fulfilled all the designs of God.

But let us turn our eyes to the blessed Jesus, that God-man appointed from eternity to complete the redemption of Israel. When he comes to fulfil his mission, preserved by the peculiar interposition of Jehovah, behold every providence opening the way before him. In his person, and in his character, he is fitted for the work: anointed of the Spirit without measure, he possesses, and manifests, all those powers and graces which are suitable to make him glorious and successful. Through every difficulty he endured, over all opposition he triumphed, till he could say “*It is finished*”—“Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” This was the prophetic declaration concerning him; “Behold

my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my Spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." (Isa. xlii. 1—4.) And again ; " Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee ; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages," &c. (xlix. 7, 8.) To whom can this refer but to the Saviour Jesus? His work of suffering and of contest is so spoken of by the Prophet that the description can only be true of him : it was He who " gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : " " I hid not my face from shame and spitting." He alone was the man of sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, upon whom was the chastisement of our peace, and on him alone the Lord laid the iniquity of us all. It is He that after all his sufferings prolongs his days, divides the spoil, justifies his people, and makes intercession for the transgressors. As man, indeed, he is in this sustained by the almighty power of Jehovah : therefore he triumphs when entering his scene of suffering, " The Lord God will help me ; therefore shall I not be confounded : therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." (l. 6, 7.) He was, indeed, the Beloved of the Father ; in the Father and the Father in him : as the Servant of the Father, he did the work of the Father, and fulfilled the will of the

Father in the redemption of his people. (John viii. 28, 29; xiv. 10.)

This is the glory of the great Mediator: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself:" engaged to sustain him and carry him through, he fulfilled his promise. This was his subject of glorying when, tabernacled in flesh, he dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Thus sustained, he suffers and he bears up through all; yea, thus he rises and triumphs, and accomplishes all the covenant engagements and designs, as the Almighty Saviour.

Thus, as in the case of Cyrus,

3. The Lord Jehovah gave him the victory over all his enemies, and caused them to submit to his authority and dominion, and enriched him with their spoils.—"I will go before thee; I will give thee the treasures of secret places. Thus saith Jehovah, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee: they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else; there is no God." (Isa. xlv. 2, 3, 14.) These things, as held forth in prophecy concerning Cyrus, were realized in fact, and are recorded in history. There we find the neighbouring nations falling before his wisdom and his power; distant lands sending their supplicating ambassadors, and submitting to his authority from the mere hearing of his exploits. We see him enriching himself with their great spoils: the spoils of Crœsus alone, the king of Lydia, and the richest monarch of his time, added 120,000,000 to his treasury. Thus the way was prepared for the projected order throughout the Babylonish empire. Babylon was at that time the mistress of the world; immensely strong, and exorbitantly rich. It is said to have been forty-five miles in compass, its wall to have been thirty-two feet in thickness, and one hundred cubits high; so that six chariots might drive abreast upon

the top of it. And such were its internal resources, that the project of taking the city appeared as the most ridiculous folly, and inspired the inhabitants and the defender with the most unlimited confidence. But God delivered it into the hands of Cyrus exactly as he had foretold (chap. xlv. 1, 2): all the streets which led to the river Euphrates, which ran through it, were secured by brazen gates, which were shut every night; but Cyrus, diverting the water from its channel, entered the empty bed; and the thoughtless defender, despising the idea of attack, and inebriated at a sumptuous feast in honour of their gods, had left the gates open. Cyrus, profiting by this mistake, entered thereby, and surprised the king in his palace; and his death secured the whole. Thus the prophecy, the most improbable in its circumstances, was literally fulfilled.

But behold a greater than Cyrus! He comes for the redemption of his chosen Israel, and every enemy gives way before him! His design is to destroy death, and him that had the power of death; to bruise the serpent's head; to overcome the mighty enemy of his people, and to establish his own empire. In every attack he is victorious: the spiritual bars of iron and gates of brass are broken before him: He destroys the works of the devil, sin, and death; the one by his atonement and righteousness, the other by his death and resurrection. The Prophet therefore celebrates his condescension, his agonizing death, and exalted victory; and describes him as cut off, but not for himself; and yet even then "finishing the transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24, 26.) So the Prophet Isaiah describes him, when wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, as still prolonging his days, and dividing the spoil with the mighty, &c. (Isa. liii.) The cross and the grave were very unlikely means of accomplishing such a purpose as this; but through these he endured till he had made the atonement,

and therefore over all he triumphed in his resurrection: here he “spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. ii. 15.) We therefore triumph in our conquering Redeemer, and say, “The breaker is come up before his people: they have therefore broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; and their king shall pass before them, and Jehovah on the head of them.” (Micah ii. 13.) What are all the glories of the most mighty conqueror upon earth, to these glories of our Redeemer Jesus? Who is this, what mighty Conqueror, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength? It is Jehovah; he that speaketh in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore is he red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? He hath trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him: He hath trodden them in his anger, and trampled them in his fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon his garments, and he will stain all his raiment. (Isa. lxiii. 1, &c.) “Behold he ascendeth on high, leading captivity itself captive, and receiving gifts to give unto men.” (Psa. lxviii. 18.) Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; that the King of Glory may come in. And if it be asked, Who is the King of Glory? it is the Lord Jehovah; the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle; the Lord of Hosts: yea, it is our Jesus. Lift up your heads, then, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in, &c. (Psa. xxiv. 7—10.) Now he is enriched, not with the millions of earthly treasures; but in him are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 3 and 9.); and for us all mediatorial fulness of mercy, grace, spiritual blessings, and of glory; that out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace. And here it is that Cyrus is the most eminent type of the Lord Jesus; namely, in the design of all his victories,

which, however they might be in his own view, were in the purposes of God, who raised him up, guided, girded, strengthened, and prospered him, not with any reference to himself, but for the deliverance of the Israel of God. “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name.” “He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives.” (Isa. xlv. 4, 13.) “He shall say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” (xlv. 28.) Immediately therefore, upon the confirmation of his government in the capture of Babylon, we find him issuing his royal edicts for their deliverance. He proclaims liberty to the captives, supplies them with treasures by the way, encourages their return to the land of Israel, and leads and promotes the rebuilding of their temple. In all these points, we behold him as a most remarkable type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, *In the proclamation of liberty to miserable captives.*—The decree is twice recorded; in the close of the Second Book of Chronicles, to shew the end of their captivity; and in the beginning of Ezra, to introduce the circumstances of their deliverance. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 1—4.) “Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all the kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusa-

lem*.” But our Jesus proclaims a more exalted liberty ; and to captives in a much more degraded and miserable situation, the captives of sin and satan. Behold, the great trumpet is blown, that they may come, who are ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, to worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem ; a figure by which his spiritual Gospel church is frequently represented. (Isa. xxvii. 13.) Its proclamation is pardon to the guilty, deliverance to the captive prisoner of sin, salvation to the lost and ruined, and all the blessings of grace and mercy to every soul that is willing to take the advantage of the proffered benefit. Jesus himself, sounded this silver trumpet of mercy, when he proclaimed, “ Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out ”— “ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.) It is the great design of the Gospel ministry, established in his church, to prolong the joyful sound ; for his ambassadors are to proclaim, “ God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” &c. “ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ: as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v. 19, &c.) Let us then avail ourselves of the proclamation of the blessed Jesus, to go up out of the land of our captivity, to the Jerusalem which is above, where the temple of his church shall be erected to his everlasting glory.

Did the captive Jews rejoice when the proclamation of Cyrus went out throughout the land of Babylon ; “ Who is there among you of all his people ? his God be with him, and let him go up ; ” how much more should the captives of sin and satan rejoice in the proclamation of the Saviour ; Whosoever will, let him come : return unto me, for I have redeemed thee ? As the great design, both of his humiliation and of his exaltation, was the deliverance and salvation

* We are expressly told in both these passages, that it was in the first year of his reign, “ that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet might be fulfilled,” &c.

of his people, the Prophet has given us a most encouraging description of his character and office, and of his preparation for its fulfilment, with which the Redeemer himself opened his commission in the synagogue of Nazareth, and asserted his fitness for his work. It is peculiarly suited to this view of his grace and mercy. “Behold the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord” Jehovah “hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” (Isa. lxi. 1.) Go then, sinner, out of this land of thy captivity: thou hast the liberty of returning to God, of setting out heaven-ward, of joining the company of his church and people, who, as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, are seeking a better country, even an heavenly one; yea, you are invited to come to Him who will be your Leader, Director, and Preserver, through all the way till you get there.

Those who loved their captivity better than the offered liberty remained behind; but those who embraced the proclamation, even “all those whose spirit God had raised up to go” (Ezra i. 5), left their sordid captive state, and went up to the land of their inheritance, to build the temple of Jehovah. So it is spiritually, whenever the Gospel proclaims the tidings of deliverance and salvation: how many, attached to their corruptions, their bondage-chains, still remain under sin, and find more gratification in their lusts and passions, than in the glorious liberty of the Gospel! None but those whose heart the Lord stirs up embrace the offer, and rise to holy liberty, to spiritual life, and to endless glory. Those, however, who stay behind in the land of captivity, among the enemies of God must expect their fate. The Jews who remained behind were soon, it is probable, intermingled with the people; for we know not what became of them, and most probably they perished in the destruction of those nations.—Take care, sinner, how you neglect the great salvation, while it is the accepted time; for those who are found among sinners, in a world

that lieth in wickedness, shall perish with the world. But as to those who are willing to return to God in him, he says, “Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take away the stumbling-block out of the way of my people” (Isa. lvii. 14): Let the way be open, let no impediment obstruct their progress: and the way is indeed open; the perfect work of Christ hath taken away every obstacle in the way to God, and may take away every fear from the mind of the penitent sinner. His promise is free; his promise is full; and there is redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, the forgiveness of all sin, justification from all things; and whosoever believeth shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. Hear it, penitent sinner, with gratitude, faith, and joy.

But, 2. Cyrus not only directed their return, *but provided all things necessary for the way.* (Ezra. i. 4.)—“Let the men of the place help him with silver and gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will-offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.” “And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.” (ver. 6.) Here, indeed, the utmost that Cyrus could do is but a faint emblem of that infinite sufficiency of grace which dwells in Jesus, for the constant unfailing and abundant supply of his people. “He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he deny to them that walk uprightly.” To him we are encouraged to come for every needful supply of mercy and grace. His promise extends to all things needful, or to all that we shall ask in his name, according to his promise: nor does the promise fail till we are placed beyond a want, in his presence above; for He will assuredly bring all his people to the land of promise, the new Jerusalem which is above. “I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.” There shall the temple of the Lord be built; and all the living stones which he hath prepared be laid in their appointed place, to

form the spiritual temple, a temple which shall never more be destroyed, and which he shall inhabit for ever. (1 Pet. ii. 4—6.) It is therefore predicted of this Almighty Redeemer, “He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory.” (Zech. iv. 6—10; vi. 13, &c.) His hand, which hath laid the foundation, shall also finish it. Then shall all the work be to the glory of the Eternal Jehovah. The raising up, and the prospering of Cyrus, was intended that “they might know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Jehovah, and there is none else.” (Isa. xlv. 5, 6.) But in the work of redemption by Christ Jesus, shall be made known to powers and principalities, in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God. The whole church shall be to the praise of his glory,—to the praise of the glory of his grace: the purpose of his love revealed, manifested, and completed in Christ Jesus, shall exhibit, through eternal ages, the glory of his wisdom, power, love, and grace, beyond all his other works, and afford a subject of everlasting thanksgiving and adoration to the church. Their songs of triumph shall proclaim, “Worthy is the Lamb;” and all their united voices shall ascribe “blessing, honour, glory, and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.” (Rev. v. 11—14.)

Thus we have taken a view of this eminent type of the Lord our Redeemer. The parallel appears exact in various circumstances; but wherein the type is glorious in all respects, the Antitype excels in glory. Let us consider, and run over, the circumstances which mark his vast superiority.

1. The one was appointed without his knowledge; “thou knowest not;” but Jesus undertakes the work of redeeming his people with the consent, the desire, and the love of his heart. When set up from everlasting, his delights were with the sons of men: then he said, “Lo! I come,” &c.

2. The one knew not that God was leading him to such an issue; but Jesus, the Beloved of the Father, delights to

do the will of God. His law is within his heart; and, in his condescension upon earth, it was his meat and his drink to do the will of God in the salvation of his people. (John iv. 34.)

3. The one had no such object in the contemplation of his own mind; but Jesus loved his church, and gave himself for it, &c. When he was about to suffer, he said, “For this cause I came into the world.” Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No: “for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name,” though in the bitterest scene of my sufferings and death. I lay down my life for the sheep.

4. The best triumphs of the one were temporal victories over the nations, and the best fruit of them mere temporal blessings: but the conquests of Jesus are eternal conquests over the spiritual enemies of his church, and the fruit of them eternally glorious; for the blessings which he bestows are extended through life and through death, and are suitable to the nature, and commensurate to the duration, of the immortal soul.

5. Cyrus was a great and powerful king, honoured by many people: but behold in the Antitype, the King of kings and Lord of lords. His dominion is an everlasting dominion: all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him service. To our blessed Jesus every knee shall bow, and either submit to the sceptre of his grace, or bend and be broken beneath the rod of his wrath. He shall be adored by all redeemed sinners, and by all the company of the blessed throughout eternity.

6. The designs of Cyrus were long interrupted by the malice of enemies; nor could Cyrus prevent their rage, or secure the performance of his decree in favour of the Jewish people. But though the enemy may oppose our blessed Lord, and for a short time retard the progress of his designs of mercy, all enemies are in his hands, and can do no more than he sees right to permit. It is only by his permission that they grieve or hinder his people in their work: nor shall they proceed a step further than he will

overrule, for his own glory and the good of his church. And every enemy, every Tobiah and Sanballat, shall yield and fall at the word of his power. Those who resist the designs of Christ Jesus in the deliverance and salvation of his people, shall fall under his righteous judgment. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker;" "for all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." (Isa. xlv. 9, 24.) The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand: he will do all his pleasure; and all his designs shall be accomplished. Before this great Zerubbabel, every mountain shall become a plain, and the top stone of the spiritual temple be laid, with shoutings of, "Grace, grace unto it." (Zech. iv. 6—10.) When Cyrus gave commandment to rebuild the temple, he was not able to bring it to effect, and complete the design; but Jesus hath almighty power to complete his purposes of love to his people, or for the destruction of his enemies. It had been better that a millstone had been hanged about the neck of a sinner, and he cast into the sea, than that he should attempt to injure the least of his servants; when he shall come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction. (2 Thess. i. 8, 9.) Then shall his church, restored and glorified, obtain the inheritance above, for which they are now kept by the mighty power of God, and to which they were appointed by his everlasting love. (1 Pet. i. 3—5; 1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 13.) He that hath begun will complete his good work of grace. How glorious the state to which his people are hastening! what a change from the captivity of sin to the kingdom of eternal glory! There he will bring all his people, even to the new Jerusalem above, where there shall be no sin, no enemy, no sorrow, no fear; and where their happiness shall know no change nor period. How infinitely more glorious that heavenly temple than to be erected, than the most beauteous fabric of earthly structure,—the living temple, erected of lively stones, through which the everlasting praises of redeemed sinners shall

sound, and which the immediate presence of Jehovah shall eternally beautify with glory.

All the privileges of Israel were but emblems of these spiritual realities: all were but types, and figures, and shadows of the glory of our Jesus, in his person, work, and benefits to his people. Blessed be the Lord for thus condescending to our infirmities, and directing us through earthly to heavenly glories.

In his church below, we are already come in faith to the mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem; and shall soon join the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are in heaven: then we shall come to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Heb. xii. 22—24.)

Oh, that he would display such almighty power and love towards my soul, and bring me finally through to triumph with his redeemed! then let him have all the glory, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the one covenant God of Israel, the one Jehovah, throughout eternity!

ESSAY X.

Merciful.

IT is one of the most important traits of the character of the Redeemer, and most necessary for the consolation of sinful people, that he is Merciful. Mercy is suited to sinners; and he who is to be the Saviour of such, must be eminently endowed with this quality and disposition and character.

Mercy is that essential perfection of the Divine nature, whereby God pities and relieves the miseries of his creatures. And as all misery is the effect of sin, sinners alone can, in a proper sense, be the objects of mercy: though his mercy (meaning his goodness) is over all his works: redeeming, pardoning, sanctifying, saving mercy, is peculiarly appropriated to guilty sinners. The mercy of Jehovah indeed must be consistent with his justice, and all his infinite perfections; and therefore the infinite wisdom of the eternal counsels of Jehovah laid the plan, to harmonize all his attributes in shewing mercy to sinners. But this plan itself arises from the infinite grace or mercy of his heart; and therefore now shines forth consistently in the Gospel, and in the person of the Redeemer. No part of his character is more illustrious or more striking. He appears, in every representation of him in the Scriptures, as that Saviour who would encourage the guilty sinner to approach the throne of God, as ready to receive, as ready to pardon, the sinner; as inclined to bear with the infirmities of his people; as everlastingly compassionate to the wants of the miserable, and ever ready to bestow upon the needy suppliant all the blessings of salvation. This is the glory of our Saviour Jesus.

While contemplating the exalted Redeemer in his divine perfections and honours, let this endear him to our heart, and be our confidence and joy. The consideration of this will lead us to the subject marked out peculiarly for our present attention, and will afford the truest example, the sweetest pattern, and the strongest motive to brotherly Christian love.—That we may have clear views of his glory in this respect, we may consider, first, The purposes and transactions of mercy from everlasting: secondly, We may trace it into its execution in time: thirdly, Its manifestation in him in the days of his flesh: fourthly, The discovery of it upon his resurrection, and since his ascension to the Throne. These views, connected with the security which he hath provided for the enjoyment of it in the souls of his people, will present to us a glorious image in the person and character of the Redeemer. And may his Holy Spirit testify of him to our hearts, and so draw our hearts to him, that the enjoyment may be our own, in the views and exercises of faith!

To take a suitably comprehensive view of the mercy of the Redeemer, we must contemplate,

1. *The purposes of this mercy, in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, from everlasting.*—To accommodate the actings of the Eternal Mind to our comprehension, Scripture leads us back to a covenant of mercy; a transaction between the eternal Three in Jehovah, in behalf of, and for the redemption of, man. And though the formal arrangement of such a covenant act is not described, nor the fact itself formally asserted; yet it appears to me, that the very names and personal character and offices of the Three Persons in the Godhead, and the whole plan of salvation, arise from, and are connected with, such a transaction, and could not consistently be maintained without it. To this, even the purposes of Jehovah in himself, the Apostle traces up, as to its source, every blessing of salvation. (Eph. i. 3, 4, 9.) Then the counsel was arranged and confirmed by the oath of Jehovah (the Aleim, the Covenanters,) which should lay a

ground of strong consolation to them who should fly for refuge, to lay hold of this hope set before them in the Gospel. Then, in a word, Infinite Wisdom, Grace, and Truth designed and adjusted the plan, to pluck sinners from misery; a plan in which mercy should be proposed and displayed, together with all the other Divine perfections, each equally glorious and equally glorified in the mystery of redemption.

In this covenant, the person of our Redeemer bears a most conspicuous place; for then He was set up from everlasting, by his own voluntary act,—consecrated, appointed, and set apart as the Mediator between God and man, and his delights were with the sons of men. (Prov. viii. 22, &c.) He is, therefore, represented as pitying our ruined estate, as looking when there was none to help, and bringing salvation with his own arm; as then offering himself to the work, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!” thy will in the salvation of sinners. He undertook the work of atonement for sin, and satisfaction to justice, with all its required humiliation, agonies, and sorrow: he undertook the work of redemption, with all its conflicts and mighty labours, and in the full view of every consequence, determining to become the Surety of the covenant, the Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour. For this the Father gave him, and laid our help upon the Mighty One. For this He gives himself, and takes our sins and curses, that his chastisement might be our peace. This was, indeed, an act of sovereign mercy, for nothing in sinners could deserve or claim it; nor did any weeping penitent appear supplicating at the foot of the Throne. No; he has mercy because he will have mercy; and rebels, guilty, ungrateful, and undone, considered as such, are the subjects it embraces in its provisions and its blessings; for one of its first provisions is repentance, and its first great blessing remission of sins.

These views engaged and interested the mind of the Psalmist: “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all

generations. For I have said; Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens." (Psa. lxxxix. 1, 2.) And at the same time he looks back to the covenant of mercy, entered into with the beloved of the Lord (ver. 19, 20), with the literal David; for it appears by the latter part of the Psalm to have been written long after his glorious reign had terminated, and which was confirmed with him for the salvation of his people, by everlasting faithfulness and truth. (ver. 28, &c.) This gives us a most exalted view of the mercy of the Lord Jesus; when we see its covenant displays arising from everlasting, and flowing out of the grace of his own infinite mind, and then laying all its plans and designs sure, wise, immoveable, and immutable. The vast retrospect through the everlasting past, shall fill with astonishment the mind of redeemed sinners through the everlasting to come; while all the blessed effects shall be eternally enjoyed in the immediate presence of Him to whose eternal counsel and unchangeable love they are indebted for all.

But let us trace the same mercy,

2. *Into its exhibition in time.*—And here we find it contemporary with the wants of man, and standing ready, as it were, to be glorified upon the first transgression; for immediately as man feels himself a sinner, Mercy reveals its provision for salvation, and the promise of the Seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15.) revived the hopes of the condemned sinner. That this was a discovery from the Saviour himself, is evident: "for no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him." (John i. 18.) The cherubic representation was, as I apprehend, an enigmatical discovery of the method of his mercy, by the covenant of the Triune Jehovah; and of the second Person united with the manhood, to reveal it to sinners; and was most probably the centre of union to believers under that dispensation, as the temple was in after times to the Jews, where the Lord displayed his peculiar

presence; and from which Cain as a rebel and apostate went out, and so went out from the presence of Jehovah. (Gen. iv. 16.) To Noah, after the flood, the promise of grace and mercy was again given, and the covenant of grace and mercy again displayed and confirmed in Christ Jesus. For what else can be the meaning of that declaration, "And surely the blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it;" but that the blood of the sacrifice should be the mean of the atonement? And it is added, "At the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother," or at the hand of Him who is every man's Brother, the man Christ Jesus, "will I require the life of man." For it is not probable, as we find the promises of the new covenant repeated to the patriarchs upon most extraordinary occasions, that it should be limited to Noah, and in him to his posterity, after such a remarkable display of the righteous judgment of God in the destruction of the world of the ungodly. But unless it be found in this place, we can find no discovery of it on this important occasion, and to a person again the head, though not the covenant head, of the whole human race. And this is recorded more probably, as these words immediately follow the precept for the prohibition of eating blood, the reason of which is given in Levit. xvii. 11; that "it was given upon the altar to make an atonement for the soul, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

To Abraham the promise was renewed in a more clear and explicit manner. His eminent Seed was marked out as the promised Messiah and Saviour, in whom all nations should be blessed. He rejoiced to see the day of Christ: he saw it, and was glad. By the light of this promise the ancient patriarchs walked, lived, and died in the faith; while the appointed sacrifice directed them to the atoning Saviour as the hope of salvation. But the whole system of types and shadows was brought to perfection under the Levitical dispensation, where every thing had a suitable and most apposite reference to the great Atonement; the glorious High Priest and Intercessor; the medium of communication between a holy God and sinners. And amongst

these the cherubim again appeared as the most eminent and the consummation of that dispensation; the brightness shining from the face of which, on the great day of atonement, when the priest entered into the most holy place, was an emblem and sure token of the Divine acceptance of the persons and services of the Jewish nation, and his peculiar favour to them, in the use of the means of his own appointment. The place, therefore, where this display was made, was most suitably called the Mercy-seat. But of this glorious Saviour, in all the riches of his grace and mercy, did all the prophets witness; his person, his condescension, his sufferings, his victory, were in their predictions most illustriously displayed. And still they afford a body of indisputable and convincing evidence to the person of Jesus, as the promised Messiah, while we see their predictions fulfilled in his character and actions. Hence also we are assured of the fulfilment of every promise of grace connected with the prophetic declaration of our Almighty Redeemer. But, “ behold our Salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.” He appears himself in the nature of his brethren, whom he comes to redeem: he becomes Immanuel, God with us.

3. Let us trace the manifestations of his mercy *in the days of his flesh*.—The act itself is, indeed, one of the highest proofs, one of the sublimest exercises of it. Mercy could never give a nobler display of itself, and of its regard to guilty sinners of mankind, than when “ He who was rich for our sakes became poor;” when “ He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself, and became of no reputation,” &c. Immanuel, God with us, is Mercy’s highest act and surest pledge. Here mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Psal. lxxxv. 10.) Brought to our view through the infinite wisdom and almighty power of Jehovah, we cannot but observe in the whole of his conduct this leading feature. Mercy is the strongest line of his character upon earth. Let us turn our eyes to trace its

beautiful displays in all his actions; the whole exemplifying his design, and his unchangeableness and faithfulness in its execution. His tenderness and compassion were the subject of prophecy; and Jehovah calls our attention to him in this light by the Prophet. "Behold my servant, &c.: he shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break; and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth, &c." (Isa xlii. 2, &c.) We find this tenderness and gentleness of character most admirably displayed towards his disciples, in pitying their ignorance, and bearing with their unbelief. But his whole conduct is eminently suitable to the character of the merciful Saviour of sinners, who came to seek and to save that which was lost; who came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, and to gather the wandering sheep into the fold of God. He himself, therefore, represents his love by the beautiful parable of the returning prodigal, readily welcomed, after all his ingratitude, baseness, and deserved misery, to his father's house and bounty; and by the single lost sheep, which the careful shepherd seeks out, through all the dangers of the wilderness, and carries on his shoulders back again to his fold and pasture. He never, therefore, despised the most miserable of the wretched, though they had ruined themselves by their folly: he never refused his aid to the afflicted and the needy, nor rejected the most polluted penitent which sought his grace. Of this we have the most remarkable instance, in the woman "who was a sinner" in the house of Simon, to whom he forgave much; to teach us that he will frankly and freely forgive all, in those who, like her, fall penitent at his feet. (Luke vii. 37, &c.) His whole employ was to relieve the distressed, to heal the diseased, to teach the ignorant, to shew the sinner the way of salvation; to turn him from the error of his ways, and then, to speak the words of consolation, and encourage him by the promise and declaration of pardoning mercy; "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." For this he invited the distressed of every description to come

to him. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:" "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For this He promised, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out!" And he was ever as kind in his reception, as gracious in his invitation; and as faithful to his promise, as he was bountiful to promise. All who put his truth and mercy to the trial, by imploring his aid and blessing, find that they could not come to him in vain.

Though despised and rejected, though treated with contempt and scorn at Jerusalem, he still laments over the fate which their obstinacy and impiety had brought upon them; and in the sight of the city which he knew to be devoted to destruction, wept over it and exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

Nothing can interrupt or prevent the execution of his designs of love and mercy. He came to bear our sins and carry our sorrows, to lay down his life, to give his life a ransom for many, to offer himself an offering and a sacrifice, and to be the Propitiation through faith in his blood: nor could all the hatred of sinners damp his zeal, or turn the purposes of his heart.

All these circumstances of degradation and contumely he foresaw when he undertook the work. He knew that he should be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" he knew all the sorrows of the work, yet he makes his soul an offering for sin. And in the immediate view of all his sufferings, having respect to the recompence of reward, he ardently longs for their consummation. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how is my soul straitened till it be accomplished!" What an exalted idea does this give to us of the amazing mercy and benevolence of his heart!

But let us go and stand beside the cross, where the Redeemer hangs, suspended by the nails in the tenderest

parts of his hands and of his feet; and to which he voluntarily resigned himself for our salvation. There we behold the grand exhibition of redeeming mercy. If we inquire who it is that condescends to that scene of ignominy and agony: it is the Son of God Most High. If we inquire for what: it is for our sins. If we ask the reason why: it is to redeem us to God. If we further ask, who fixed him there? those whom he came to redeem, and some who were actually redeemed by the blood of his cross; while the patient Sufferer cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was not our goodness, but our guilt, and its consequent wrath, which first led him to the undertaking; and, the more he discovers of the guilt and wretchedness of man, while tabernacling in human nature amongst a fallen race of sinners, the more his heart yearns with compassion, and the more steadily and zealously he pursues the purposes of his grace. Here, indeed, is a merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. We trace back the sovereign purposes of grace to the counsels of eternity: we see it continuing the same with an undeviating course through time; discovering itself most conspicuously in his person in the days of his flesh, and consummating all its work of atonement and satisfaction on the cross. If we follow the same stream of mercy onward, we shall have to observe,

4. The same discovery of it *upon his resurrection, and since his ascension to the Throne*; with an assurance of its flowing with an unchangeable and increasing tide throughout eternity.—In his first commission to his disciples, mercy triumphs over judgment: to Jerusalem, the scene of his sufferings, is made the first offer of his mercy; and Jerusalem sinners, who had crucified him, are first to hear its proclamation, "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" (Luke xxiv. 47.) The great Apostle of the Gentiles—whom he condescended personally to meet, to call, to convert, and to send forth—was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, and at the very

time hastening to fulfil his malicious intention of laying waste the church of Christ and ruining his cause. But having much forgiven, therefore he loved much, and could bear witness that, “to him first Jesus Christ had shewn all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” By his ministry and apostleship, Gentiles in the most awful state of spiritual death and sinful pollution, are appointed to obtain salvation; and Corinthian sinners, whom the Apostle describes, (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10), are “washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.” (ver. 11.) Exalted on the Throne, to carry on the same purpose of love, when he issues his proclamation, it corresponds with the language of Prophets and Apostles, in their richest display of the sovereignty and freeness of Divine grace; “The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. xxii. 17.)

The preaching of the Gospel is the continued proclamation of this same mercy; for this is the peculiar message of the Gospel ministry, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (2 Cor. v. 19.) Therefore he hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation, and his ministers are his ambassadors, to beseech sinners in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God. Wondrous grace! that the eternal Jehovah should so condescend, by his commissioned servants, to entreat the return and reconciliation of offending rebels!

But on his throne of glory he does not forget the design of his condescension, nor cease to exert his own almighty power for the salvation of his people. He sends forth his Spirit from on high, whose office it is to convince of sin, and of righteousness, &c.; to collect his people to himself, to bring them from their sinful state; first to the temper, and then to the privileges of his children; to bring them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,

(Acts xxvi. 18), to bring them out of the kingdom of satan, unto his own kingdom of grace. And when he hath called his people to himself effectually, by the power and grace of his Holy Spirit, the plan of his regal administration is a plan of mercy; bearing long, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; effecting all by his almighty power, directing all by infinite wisdom. He carries on his government on a system of mercy; so that all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant and his testimonies. And conducted by unchangeable mercy through time, “they look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.” (Jude 21.)

Here is a system and a plan of mercy which renders the exercise of it sure to every penitent believing sinner. Not a mere temporary affection or feeling of compassion, but a Divine perfection, harmonizing with every other perfection of Deity, and glorifying every attribute of the Godhead in its exercise; and then treasured up in the heart of Jesus, for its constant and triumphant displays.

Every view of Divine mercy in Christ Jesus renders its security more evident, and encourages the application of the sinner. The only ground of hope, and the first and chief subject of a sinner's prayer, is mercy. The prospect of a sinner without this would be gloomy indeed, for nothing besides could ever lay a ground of encouragement. The Law condemns, Justice charges upon the sinner his guilt and his rebellion; the depravity of his nature, and the transgressions of his life: while Truth and Faithfulness require the execution of the sentence. What plea can the sinner bring in justification of his disobedience? How shall he evade the wrath? or, how can he endure it? Sinking beneath the dreadful sentence, he must still acknowledge, “Thou art just in judgment, &c.” Nothing but an act of mercy can relieve a sinner. With this disposition, therefore, and with this prayer, he must come to the throne of God, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”—Penitent and fearful sinner, thou hast to do with a Saviour, whose great character is that of the Merciful One: so he hath always appeared; manifesting his compassion to the

most miserable, and even to the most guilty ; and still he is exalted for the same purpose, and delights in the same acts of mercy upon his throne.

When he comes again in his glory, to take vengeance of them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, despised mercy will indeed aggravate the guilt and condemnation of the sinner. Then the best character which has not embraced mercy, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and which is not found in Christ Jesus by faith, will indeed be found awfully deficient ; and the mercy of Jesus shall be turned into the wrath of the Lamb : but till then, the day, the dispensation of mercy, is still prolonging. Now he invites, and will not cast away ; now his blood can cleanse from all sin, his righteousness justify from all things, and his grace save unto the uttermost the vilest of the vile ; and none shall ever seek his mercy, and be sent destitute away. Surely this may encourage your approach, your earnest supplication, your humble faith, your cheerful hope, your steadfast confidence. The ground of all thy fear is sin ; and sin unpardoned would certainly ruin thy soul ; but He gave himself for our sins, and his precious blood cleanseth from all sin. He promises the forgiveness of sins to the returning sinner : “ yea, come now,” says He, “ and let us reason together ; and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow,” &c. (Isa. i. 18.) “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (lv. 7—9 ; Psa. ciii. 11—18.) Rejected Mercy alone will now bind the sinner for his wrath. Being free in its origin, it must be secure and faithful in its exercise ; for as the purpose of Mercy was independent of any goodness in us, so our guilt and vileness, felt and lamented, shall not prevent its bestowal upon us. It had an original respect to sinners, and was designed for their pardon and salvation ; and sinners shall receive it, when supplicating for it at the Throne of Grace ; and therefore the whole system is called, “ the sure Mercies of David,” or of the Beloved.

The plan of Mercy was hid in God throughout eternity. (Eph. iii. 9.) It was laid up in Christ, and brought into its primary manifestation to created intelligences, through the counsels of eternity; and as soon as the cloud of guilt had darkened this lower world, blessed be the Lord our Saviour, the beams of mercy shone forth, and shone through and dissipated the solemn gloom. The first promise gave being to the counsels of Eternal Mercy; and every dispensation of God to man enlarged its growth, till it rose to maturity, in the person, the work, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the glory, the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ; and there it reigns upon the throne with him for ever. These are views which tend to confirm, without doubt, the expectation of a penitent sinner, and his confidence in the promises of Mercy. But the view which the Apostle gives us in Hebrews (ii. 17, 18), is calculated to bring it down to our feelings and general apprehensions, as it rests the display of Mercy upon that sympathy which arises from a similarity of nature and a fellowship of sufferings. The same trials, the same sufferings, the same temptations, fixed (if we may so say) the pity and compassion of his heart: at least to us, and according to our view, it gives an additional proof of their reality, and encouragement to expect their exercise: "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." (ver. 18.)

Let the consideration bring it near to our heart in the reception of faith. He who, as One in Jehovah, the Divine essence, in the counsels of eternity, united in the merciful arrangement of infinite wisdom and everlasting love, in the fulness of time became like one of us; yea, "in all things he was made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (ver. 17.) It was human nature, not in its glory, dignity, or elevated state, which he took upon him, though this had been a condescension beyond the tongue of angels to celebrate, but in its present debasement on

account of sin. As such, he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, though himself without sin. He knew, therefore, all the guilt of sin, without himself being actually guilty: He knew all the pollution of sin, without himself being polluted: He knew all the consequences of sin, bearing all, as if a sinner of the deepest dye, without having any sinfulness in his nature, or any sin in his practice. Our infirmities, our sorrows, our sufferings, rested in their fullest measure on this Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot. Upon this the Apostle grounds the certainty of his compassion; for, while in his Divine nature, he is able to bear and to deliver, as the Almighty Saviour, in his human nature he knows how to sympathize with those who are labouring under its guilt, or oppressed with its consequences: since in all things, by the imputation of guilt, and the enduring of its curse, he was made like unto us.

The same view is presented by the Apostle to the faith of the humble believer in Heb. iv. 15. “We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” While, therefore, we contemplate the mercy of our great High Priest, we have in these its deepest exercises the most satisfactory proofs of its reality, and the surest pledges of its continued manifestation.

He who hath done so much—He who hath submitted to such a humble, tried, afflicted, tempted state, for the purpose of redeeming his people *to himself*—will surely not deny the blessings of his salvation to the humble sinner at his feet. But with all that grace which led him through the scenes of his humiliation, he welcomes the returning sinner, pities the afflicted and the tried believer, compassionates the tempted soul, and rescues with his almighty arm and his unchangeable grace every believing soul from the sorrow and sufferings of the present state, and from the hands of every enemy, into the kingdom of everlasting Mercy. Well then might the Apostle argue from hence,

“ Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (ver. 16.)

Let the tried and tempted believer embrace the consolation. To encourage your hope of mercy and of grace, Jesus passed through the same path, and suffered, being tempted. This experimental knowledge of human nature, in its trials and its sufferings, has, we are expressly told, confirmed his sympathy with the distressed: nor can any circumstance of inward or outward sorrow be experienced by his people, that he hath not known, and that he cannot therefore compassionate. In all our afflictions he is afflicted; and, having suffered temptation himself, “ he will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.” Let weak faith take the encouragement: your trials and sorrows shall not weaken, but call forth, the display of his mercy. Temptations shall excite his sympathy; and though he may see it to be wise and good to permit them, he will overrule them for good, pity and sustain under them, and gloriously deliver from them in the end. Then you shall be more than conqueror over all. Happy sinner, who is waiting at the Throne of Grace, who is resting in Christ Jesus! happy sinner, who is found in Him! you shall praise him for all needful mercy by the way, and for infinite and everlasting mercy in the close, when the unchangeable and boundless mercy of the Saviour shall terminate in everlasting life.

ESSAY XI.

The Samaritan.

THE account which is recorded in St. Luke, of the conduct of a Samaritan to a wounded Jew, is considered, by different writers, in very different lights. By some it is considered as a true history of a real person, or of a fact which actually happened in the place and with the circumstances there mentioned: nor is this at all improbable, since Jerusalem was about forty miles from Jericho, where many of the priests resided, and from thence attended their courses in the temple. By others it is considered as a parable (like that of the Rich Man and Lazarus), intended to enforce the exhortation to brotherly love, and good-will towards our enemies: and in this view, nothing could be more suitably or more ingeniously conceived or told. The necessity and propriety of forgiveness and brotherly kindness could not be more finely illustrated, or more forcibly expressed, than by referring the act of kindness to a Samaritan, and making the dying Jew the recipient of his benevolent aid. As the Samaritans were objects of contempt and hatred among the Jews, on account of their seceding from the temple and its worship; and were looked upon as heretics and schismatics, for having established another system of worship among themselves; the parable was calculated to remind them, in the most convincing manner, of the absurdity and impropriety of general prejudices,—of the necessity and excellency of social harmony in the great family of mankind,—and that those who are sometimes most despised by us, and that for causes which may apparently justify such a temper, may possess the kindest dis-

position towards us, may be willing to become our greatest benefactors, and deserve our greatest affection, instead of jealousy and dislike. And this was intended to oppose the Jewish opinion, that no one was their neighbour but one of their own people; and that they were under no obligation to love or even to aid others. Considered in this light, the parable is, no doubt, most beautifully conceived, and related in the most engaging and instructive manner.

But if considered as a parable at all, there can be no impropriety in extending its parabolical allusion still further, and considering it rather as a continued allegory of our state as sinners; and of the person, love, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in this view, without carrying the explanation to those minutiae of interpretations which might make it contemptible and ridiculous, of which there can be no necessity; in its great and prominent features it affords us some of the most striking illustrations of the great truths of the Gospel. It admirably represents his person and his condescension; the work of his redemption, and the benefit of his mediatorial, healing, and saving care. Under this consideration, it also appears to me that the great lesson which it is intended to teach of brotherly love, is more strikingly displayed, and more effectually enforced. The parable, in this light, has a double force, as to its particular object, to what it could have in any other mode of interpretation. For what love can equal his? What forgiving mercy and benevolent attention can ever compare with that of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners? Here we have the brightest display and the most engaging and effective pattern, which includes in itself the most forcible motive for its exercise. May he become the good Samaritan to me, and to you! and we shall most effectually be taught the lesson, "as he hath loved us, that we also should love one another."

The state of the person who is the object of his compassion is thus represented: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which

stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." (Luke x. 30.)—The meaning of Jerusalem is "peace," and the city of Jericho was peculiarly devoted to the curse; and this may be referred to as most suitably marking out the two different states of man, in paradise and under sin. The original state of man, as in the first Adam, that one man who had all human nature in him, was a state of uprightness, and therefore of perfect peace: in innocence and righteousness he was safe and happy, dwelling in the paradise of peace and rest; whereas, in Jerusalem afterwards the Divine presence resided, and the God of Peace manifested all his glory and his grace. But, alas! how great the folly of man! he knew not his happiness: pride and unbelief entered into his heart, and, through a desire of elevation beyond the situation in which his great Creator had placed him, he left his first estate, and became a wanderer from God. Of his own accord, and contrary to the Divine command, he departed from his uprightness, and fell into an earthly, carnal, and accursed state of sin.

And "*he fell among thieves.*"—Sin and satan, which cast him down from his excellency, robbed him of all his glory, his peace of conscience, his Eden of delight, his communion and enjoyment of his God. When man is unwise enough to depart from God, he soon finds company to attend him, to encourage him in his disobedience, to harden him in his rebellion, and then, to take the advantage of his sin and folly to his destruction. So it is still: the devil, our own corrupt lusts, and a corrupted world, are tempters to iniquity, and then destroyers of the soul, of all its excellency and its happiness. The great seducer, the devil, first drew man into sin, and then spoiled him of the dignity of all his spiritual powers and faculties, and all the ornaments of his exalted and ennobled state,—the image of God, which was within him, and the glory of God, which was upon him. How just is every part of the following figurative description, in the experience of the race of mankind!

They “ *stripped him of his raiment.* ”—No sooner had man fallen, but he discovered that he was naked : the garment which before clothed and adorned him was the garment of original righteousness, perfect though not immutable, in which he could appear with favour and confidence in the sight of God, as complete according to the state of his creation. It is supposed by some that his body was also clothed with resplendent lustre, somewhat resembling that of our Lord on the mount of transfiguration ; but which he immediately lost upon the fall, as an emblem of the still more awful loss of that inherent righteousness with which his soul was covered, when the first man Adam was made a living soul. We see, therefore, the immediate effect of that loss ; for when the all-seeing God came down, as before, to behold his creature man, he fled, and hid himself among the trees of the garden, conscious that he was now naked of all that covering and ornament of righteousness in which alone God could view him with approbation. (Gen. iii. 7—10.) Such has been the effect transmitted to his posterity, from age to age. Man, conscious that he has nothing in which he can stand accepted before a holy God, is afraid of appearing in his sight. He endeavours, therefore, to avoid thinking of him ; or if he make the vain attempt to work out a righteousness of his own to cover him, he feels himself still exposed to the law, the justice, and the wrath of God, as destitute of that righteousness which the Law requires, and which alone can satisfy the justice of the eternal Jehovah. Hence, still he feels himself afraid of God, whom he looks upon only as some mighty power with whom he is at variance, and whose displeasure he continually dreads.

“ *And wounded him.* ”—Scripture uses a variety of allusions to represent the fall and depravity of human nature ; and no one more frequently than this. Man is represented as wounded and diseased ; and such he is, both in his body and in his soul. His body has received the fatal wound that has destroyed its principle of life, and which enters into every member, and is felt in every part, in all the in-

numerable pains which afflict and distress it. His soul is wounded in every power and faculty; so that, in the figurative language of the Prophet, “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot being full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” His eyes, his ears, his feet, his hands, are all, as figuratively represented, under the power of these fatal wounds. He is unable to behold the glory of divine and spiritual things, suited to the nature and faculties of the soul: he is disinclined to attend to them, unable to pursue after them, and incapacitated for spiritual actions. In other words, his understanding and judgment are darkened and debilitated, his will corrupted and perverted, his passions and affections debased to earth and sense, all his power for spiritual activity lost and ruined; and in his hopes and comforts he is indeed wounded, without possibility in himself of relief or recovery. This is the awful situation of every son and daughter of Adam, through relation to their original parent, as fallen and sinful in their nature and practice.—The wound of sin is indeed fatal; it is therefore added,

“*And departed, leaving him half dead.*”—Man is sometimes represented as totally dead to God; and this is literally true with regard to the life of the soul before God, and as to the things of God. Nor does this expression imply that he has any remains of will, power, or ability for the spiritual life; but that in his present state he is recoverable by the power and influence of Divine grace. And as man consists of soul and body, and is to exist in this world and in another, he may be said to be half dead. This may be said naturally, as to the body of man, because his body, though bearing in it the seeds of death, even from the beginning of life, is not yet, while in this world, actually dead: and, when it dies, it is but half of the man which dies; and spiritually, with regard to the soul, he may be said to be half dead, because the soul is really dead to God and the spiritual life, while the body is yet alive to the things of sense, and in the power of a ra-

tional and sensual life : and still further, because, though through sin and spiritual death he is exposed to death eternal, the sentence, though past, is not yet executed ; and, by the power of Divine grace, he may be recovered from spiritual death ; and, by the sovereignty of Divine mercy, may be ultimately delivered from eternal death. Now this is the awful state of man, of every man, “ who is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam,” as fallen in his first parent, and dying under the sentence and under the power of sin. Yet, alas ! how few are there that feel the wounds of sin or their state as sinners ! When very severe wounds are first inflicted, they often stupify ; and the person who has received them is not sensible of their severity. Such is the too general effect of sin : the dying sinner is in a state of spiritual stupefaction, till the body die and the solemn scenes and miseries of eternity discover to him his state, when it is beyond a remedy. And yet we are continually reminded of our state : we suffer the effects of sin in our bodies ; we know that none of the various pains, afflictions, or diseases which we experience in ourselves, or which are spread all around us, would ever have entered into the world but by sin ; we know that the sentence which is passed must soon be executed, “ Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” And shall not the sentence of death which is passed upon the soul be found equally true, and the truth and justice of God be as faithfully displayed in its execution ? “ The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Most assuredly if we remain in a state of nature, under sin, and therefore under wrath, the wages of sin will be found to be both death temporal and spiritual, as surely extending to the immortal soul as it consigns the body to the grave. If, while the body is in health, and the mind in possession of all its faculties of sensible perception and rational investigation, the soul be dead to the spiritual life, to the acts of that life, and to the knowledge and perception of spiritual objects, it is certainly hastening on to the death eternal. Whatever may be our profession or knowledge of religious

truth and doctrine, if our sins be not pardoned and the power of them subdued, if we are not made partakers of a new and spiritual life in Christ Jesus by his Spirit, we are under the power of original sin, and under the guilt of ten thousand actual sins, and thus in every way exposed to its just and eternal wages. If, then, we are not sensible of this, it arises from the fatal power of the injury we have received, and the lethargic influence of the malady under which we labour. Let us seriously consider our state in the light of God's word, and lay it deeply to heart, while there is help and deliverance at hand, and a Saviour who has the remedy suited to and sufficient for our desperate, and without him helpless, situation. To the convinced and sensible sinner uttering his complaints, and dreading the awful consequences of his guilty malady, the word of truth, in the various dispensations of God, has discovered an all-sufficient and effectual remedy; but more fully in the Gospel, where "life and immortality are brought to light." Here the glory of our Divine Redeemer and Saviour is manifested; and as every dispensation must have been entirely ineffectual without him, to him they directed the penitent and trembling sinner for life and salvation. If used in confidence upon the ordinances themselves, without the exercise of a living faith in the great Antitype of them all, they were but formal ceremonies, that availed not to the purifying of the conscience, or to the sanctification of the heart. He alone is the sum of all; in him is all the grace, to him must be all the glory.

“ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way.”—This is represented as taking place by chance; not as implying that any thing can happen by chance or uncertainty, in the affairs of men or in the ways of God—for he ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will, and governs all things in heaven and earth, to the death of a sparrow or the fall of a hair—but merely signifying that so it came to pass. Or it may intimate, that the dispensation itself originated, not in the design and purpose of man, but was under the direction and unseen appointment of

God. The allusion itself may be to the patriarchal dispensation, till the time of Moses, in which the first-born were considered as the priests, and which were afterwards redeemed from the service by the appointment of the Levites, who were joined to the Lord, as the substitute for the first-born. By this it is generally thought, that in any family-meeting, or any larger association, the eldest of the family, or of the society, officiated in the duties of the priestly office, which was the dignity and birth-right of the first-born. This made the rejection of the birth-right so heinous and offensive. In all this, the Lord Jesus Christ was represented as the First-born, the First-begotten of the Father; as the first in eminent dignity and glory, amongst and above his brethren.

“*But he, when he saw him, passed by on the other side;*”—representing, not indeed that there was no salvation or recovery under that dispensation, but that this was not in the ordinances themselves. They were only figures, types, and shadows of Him who was to come: they were soon to pass away, because of their inability. What could a priest effect who was only a man; one of a community passing away continually, and in succession, by death? He might look upon and pity the state of a dying sinner, but he himself could never give life. He might justly say, “There is One who will come, who is able to relieve. I point your faith, O thou dying sinner, to Him for salvation; but I cannot bestow the blessings that you need: I am passing on, and this dispensation passing away, to make way for Him who is the Almighty Healer.”

“*And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*”—This may have reference to the Levitical dispensation, the legal rights and ceremonies of which might cleanse the flesh, but could not purify the conscience. “The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin.” The wise and holy men of that dispensation, saw this. They were well assured that sacrifice and offering, in themselves, could afford no delight to the Infinite and Holy Jehovah; that they could

never give righteousness, restore the life of the soul, raise up to the enjoyment of God, or bestow eternal salvation: they gave (as it were) a look upon the miserable estate of fallen man; they discovered his state of sin, guilt, and condemnation, but could do no more: by the Law is the knowledge of sin. They were all arranged, so as to typify and give the sure hope of a Saviour to come: they were the emblems of his grace; but in themselves they could afford no help: they could bestow no spiritual good without Christ the promised Seed; and therefore they are represented also as passing by on the other side. But, behold the appointed Redeemer and Saviour! He came there not by chance, but according to the purpose and grace of God: He comes that way on designs of love and mercy.

“*But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*” (ver. 33, 34.)—If this description were not designed to represent the grace and love of Jesus, never was there a more striking analogy which arose without design and without the intention of the speaker. He is eminently that good Samaritan, our Neighbour in human nature, who took our nature, our very flesh and blood, that he might be our Kinsman-Redeemer. He, as he journeyed, came where he was. He left his throne above, descended from the heavenly world, and came down to earth, and condescended to be himself a sojourner and traveller through this lower world. “In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law.” (Gal. iv. 4.) In the greatness of his own love, “since the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He himself also, in like manner, took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Heb. ii. 11—14.) In all things he is made like unto his brethren; and thus he becomes the best Neighbour of human nature. Some suppose that he is called the Samaritan from the meaning of

the name itself, which signifies "the keeper." But rather he is so denominated in the allegory, because he was literally so called by the Jews (John viii. 48); and because he was treated with all that contempt and odium with which the Jews treated the Samaritans. We see him therefore, as soon as he entered this lower world, cast out and rejected, though the best Friend to the wounded Jew or Gentile: "He was despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: we hid (says the Prophet) our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isa. liii. 3.) Such has been the view in which the world has looked upon him ever since: no one ever values this incomprehensible Saviour, till taught by the influence of his Spirit. His person, his character, and his work, the exertions of his love, and the blessings of his grace, are equally disesteemed; and to the Jew he appears as a stumbling-block, and to the wise Greeks foolishness. But, though so glorious in his Divine person, and so rich in all the attributes and glories of Godhead, He emptied himself, and became of no reputation: with a heart full of love to guilty sinners, He not only gave a look of compassion, but "He remembered us in our low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever; and redeemed us from our enemies, for his mercy endureth for ever." (Psa. cxxxvi. 23, 24.) His compassions become effectual; He disposes and employs his Almighty Power and his Infinite Wisdom, in the infinite greatness of his love, to do whatever is necessary for the salvation of his people: and as in the days of his flesh he looked with compassion on the surrounding multitude that were fainting with want, and wrought a miracle of his power and love to supply them; so, looking from his Eternal Throne, he pitied the ruined progeny of a fallen parent, and "sent redemption to his people," and commanded his covenant for ever; and he is still the same, in his love and mercy, to all that come to him. The Prophet has given us a somewhat similar representation of the state of man, and the effective mercy of the Redeemer, when he describes the ruined state of Israel by that of a child

cast out from the womb, unwashed, unclothed, destitute and forsaken. Then the Redeemer passes by, and it is the time of love: He purifies, nourishes, clothes, and preserves the forlorn and miserable object, educates and prepares her for himself, and renders her comely with the comeliness which he puts upon her. (See Ezek. xvi. 1, &c.) But the love of our all-gracious Redeemer rises above every parallel, in its greatness, in the manner of its discovery, in the work it performs, and in the effect which it produces.

“ *He came where he was.*”—He came, not only in our nature, but in his infinite love. He comes into the very law-place and stead of his people: He becomes sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Thus indeed he comes near to his people, for he becomes their surety, to obey and to suffer for them, on their account, and for their salvation.

“ *And when he saw him.*”—The Lord Jesus saw his redeemed in eternity, and then his delights were with the sons of men. He saw them ruined, guilty, helpless, ungodly, and children of wrath: but even then, and in that state, he had compassion on them, in the purposes of his love; and in his own due time he fulfilled those purposes, and came to redeem them. And “when we were without strength, he died for the ungodly.” Here is the greatness, the incomprehensible mystery and wonder of his love! As in the purposes of his mercy he undertook to become the Surety of the better covenant; so, in the fulfilment of that undertaking, we behold him passing on from step to step in the acts of his condescension. He appears in our nature with all the weight and curse of sin upon him; and becomes not only the despised of men, but exposed to the curse of God. In this view it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief: he laid on him the iniquity of us all. He called his sword of justice to awake and smite the Man who was His Fellow. He put the bitter cup of sufferings into his hand; exacted to the uttermost the demands of justice; and required the ransom of the sinner, and received it fully in the blood of the Surety. Then he himself

gave himself for us : he bore our sins and became a curse and sin for us, and willingly endured the cross, despising the shame. There from his heart he poured the healing remedy, the sovereign balm for the killing wounds of sin. And since none could help but he himself ; since there could be no healing remedy but his blood ; since he must die, if man is to live ; nothing can check or stop the progress of his love in the work of redemption. He gives himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, and dies, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, so on the cross is the Son of man lifted up, “ that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Now the remedy is in his own hands to apply ; and when he comes with the power of his grace in the Gospel, the sweet application of it is made to the dying sinner : we experience fully the effect of his redeeming love in justification, sanctification, and the hope of eternal salvation. These are the gracious fruits of his compassion.

“ *He went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.*”—We cannot be at a loss to know to what this restorative alludes. The wine is no doubt his own blood, which he shed upon the cross ; the oil is his own grace ;—both applied to the heart through the promises of his word, exceeding great and precious, by the power and influence of his own Almighty Spirit, whereby they become effectual for regeneration, justification, and salvation. How sovereign are these remedies for all our sins, and all our spiritual diseases ! His blood has a value which is infinite, a virtue which is almighty, poured out for a propitiation upon the cross. Appointed and accepted of God, it cannot fail to purify the conscience ; and when applied by the Spirit, must cleanse from all sin. It is equal to all the demands of the law, satisfactory to the claims of justice, and honourable to all the perfections of Jehovah. It is the propitiation received through faith in his blood, in which God can be just and the justifier of him that be-

lieveth. (Rom. iii. 26.) In this blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph. i. 7.) And “he that believeth is justified from all things.” (Acts xiii. 39.) Here is perfect healing to the conscience: and through the merit and efficacy of this, Jesus appears as anointed of Jehovah, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring good tidings to the humble penitent sinner. (Isa. lxi. 1, &c.) And as the merit of his blood can purify the conscience, so the grace and influence of his Spirit can as truly cleanse and sanctify the heart, and heal all our diseases. The Spirit of grace effects this by teaching us our need as dying sinners, and then pouring in the wine of the Redeemer’s blood, or applying the doctrines of the Gospel,—pardon through the blood of Christ, and complete justification in his righteousness, &c. These, received in faith, bring peace and joy to the heart. And then he diffuses the oil of his quickening, sanctifying, healing grace, which softens the soul into repentance, quickens it into the exercises of faith, refreshes it under all its sorrows, and heals all its fears and sins. Let the believer look back, and remember his state when the gracious Redeemer thus passed by him in the Gospel; and he will here find a true description of what passed within his own soul in the work of regeneration and spiritual healing. Then he found his state perishing and helpless. None could help him but the Almighty Saviour: but He came in mercy; in the ordinances of his Gospel discovered the way of salvation, and manifested his saving grace. He sweetly inclined the heart, and applied his sovereign remedy for the healing of the soul. Till then, no excellency appeared in the adorable Jesus: He was accounted as the despised Samaritan; but now he is altogether lovely, infinitely precious, and the chief among ten thousand. Look to him; thou trembling sinner: turn the dying eye to Jesus: though fearful in heart, perishing and in a desperate case, he also can heal you. The good Samaritan is ever ready and all-sufficient to save. This heavenly Physician has the balm of Gilead to apply to the wounds of sin. Look-

ing into thyself, thou art wretched, thou art ready and hast reason to despair : but behold, He still passes by ; he comes near even to thee in his Gospel, with all the blessings of his love. His pardoning blood and saving grace are as all-sufficient, and he as willing to manifest to thee his great salvation. If he discovered the boundless efficacy of his love, to those in a state of sin, shall he not receive the returning sinner, and make his redeeming love effectual to the humble penitent? Though half dead, though totally dead, in sin, He can heal and give perfect health ; and cure by his almighty power, his infinite love, and his unchanging grace. Behold the salutary, healing, saving virtue, treasured up in the hand of the dying Jesus ! Ye who have experienced it, acknowledge its efficacy to his honour. Ye who need it, apply in the prayer of humility and faith, and all its benefits shall be yours. This is the grand object of the allegory, and may lead us to admire and adore the redeeming Jesus, in all the displays of his unmerited and unequalled love, and in all the boundless efficacy of his salvation. The other parts of the allegory may perhaps be applied with equal justice and propriety ; but as they would lead us into more doubtful minutiae of interpretations, we shall be short in the consideration. And

“ *He set him on his own beast ;*” by which may be meant, either his own power or his Gospel. But at least it assures us, that that which supported him through the work of his redemption, shall support all his people in the great concerns of their spiritual recovery and salvation. And

“ *He brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*”—This inn, no doubt, if it be allegorically interpreted, is his church, to which he brings all his redeemed, and where he has richly prepared every supply for their wants ; not, indeed as in heaven, the house of their heavenly Father above ; but all-sufficient for them, as strangers and pilgrims, who are passing on to their heavenly country, to the house eternal in the heavens. Here he takes care of all his church and people, through the instrumentality of his ministers, and

through the means and instruments of his own appointment. It is indeed the duty of all the officers of his church to direct sinners here; to welcome them when they come; and to administer his word and ordinances. In them the blessed Redeemer has provided for the consolation of his people: here is the bread of life, the water of consolation, the wine that cheers the heart, and every thing that can tend to the refreshment of the weary traveller in the way to Sion. The minister of the Lord will point out to the dying sinner the virtue of his blood, the justifying power of his righteousness, and the rich provision of his grace, that thus the spiritual strength may be renewed. Thus the believer is enabled, by the Spirit working in his ordinances, to take of the fulness of the Redeemer, to apply his remedy in faith, and to receive the benefit. Thus he fulfils his office to comfort the people of God. (Isa. xl. 1.) But he must administer these remedies wisely: he must probe the wound of the sinner by the word of the Spirit, and examine the various cases of the people of God: he must cry aloud, spare not, and shew unto his people their transgressions; and, by every means in his power, further their spiritual improvement. And it is the desire of the true believer to be thus tried by the word of the Law and of the Gospel; that by reproof, correction, and consolation, he may grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus, and prosper, and be in health. Thus he himself hath taken care for the spiritual progress of his believing people, that they may be supplied with all the needful aid and consolation through time, till they are completely fitted for his kingdom above.

The two pence, which he is represented as giving to the host, may denote either the two sacraments, or the two Testaments, or the gift of the graces of his Spirit, to prepare his servants for their work and office, &c. But whether specifically relating to this or not, they most certainly signify, that he has given sufficient means, sufficient directions and supplies, for the spiritual knowledge of ministers, and for the spiritual healing of his penitent

sinner. He bids them take care of all his servants who are collected under their peculiar ministry. They must watch for souls, as those who must give an account. They must labour in the word and doctrine; they must spend and be spent in the service of the Lord, and for the benefit of his redeemed ones, who are committed to them to be trained up for himself: and, while administering the remedy of his Gospel, in its direction, exhortation, warning, doctrine, and truth, they must feed them also with spiritual food, and nourish them to life everlasting. But in this work, whatever they spend he will amply and fully repay. All their labours, study, and pains, in understanding, applying, and administering his truth and ordinances, he will abundantly recompense. He now often makes their work their wages; but he will welcome them all into the joy of their Lord, when every one shall receive his proper reward, according to his proper labour, and when all those whom they have been the means of feeding, nourishing, and building up in faith and love, shall be their joy and crown of rejoicing for ever. Surely this is the Neighbour of the poor sinner, fallen into the hands of sin and satan, and ready to perish. In this view, the design of the history, or parable, or allegory, is most beautifully enforced; and we find a glorious and endearing representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, suited to the dying sinner, encouraging to the faith, and engaging to the heart, of the believer. Does my fellow-sinner desire to experience the sweet effects of his love? In the Gospel he still is present, and yet stands ready to manifest it to every believing penitent, for complete salvation. Does my fellow-Christian, who has experienced his grace, desire to experience yet more? Remember, in the inn of his church he has amply provided the means of salvation, and committed to his ministers the dispensation of his grace, while his Spirit is promised to convey it effectually, in all its sanctification and consolation, to the heart. Put, then, a greater value upon his ordinances; be

found waiting in his house ; seek for spiritual healing and spiritual increase, in his own appointed way,—in the use of his word, in the ministry of his servants, and especially in the prayer of faith for the promised power and blessing.

Admire and adore him for the suitableness and all-sufficiency of the remedy he has provided. It is the invaluable panacea, surely granted to all who apply, and surely effectual to all to whom it is applied. You feel your spiritual wounds ; then you need its healing virtue. Think not, poor sinner, that it is not for you. Why not ? Is it not provided for sinners ? is it not for the sick, the needy, the dying ? Your whole head is sick, and your whole heart is faint ; “ from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores : they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” (Isa. i. 5, 6.) But “ look unto me,” says the Saviour, “ and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” (Isa. xlv. 22.) He can restore the wanderer ; he can sooth every fear, and every smarting pain of sin ; he can bind up the broken, and he can heal the wounded conscience ; he can sanctify the polluted heart ; he can even quicken the dead : he can revive declining life, he can save the perishing : he can redeem from all the misery of sin ; and soon shall his power be manifested, when he shall cause all his redeemed to return to Sion with songs ; when they shall receive joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Think not that it is presumption for you, a dying sinner, to trust his grace, or to expect his full salvation, for he commands you so to do, and he promises the blessing to the prayer of faith. Believe, and give him the glory. The more unworthy, the more his glory will be promoted, his grace manifested, and his power displayed.

Remember his love, ye who are partakers of its restoring virtue ; remember to whom, and for what, you are indebted : then you can never forget to live to his

glory, while you feel your obligation so powerful and so abundant. “ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases.” (Psa. ciii. 1—3.) Soon will he perfect the spiritual healing : and my soul, in the perfect use of its immortal faculties, restored to the perfect image, the complete favour, and full enjoyment of the infinitely holy and blessed God, shall live with him the life of glory.

ESSAY XII.

Portion — Portion of Jacob.

WHEN the Prophet is presenting the Redeemer to the faith of his people, under the title which we are now to consider; he is particularly engaged in contrasting the glory and all-sufficiency of the God of Israel, with the weakness and vanity of those heathen idols, to which they had continually turned from the Lord Jehovah. And from the unprofitableness and disappointment which must result from such dependence, he expostulates with them, in a most forcible and interesting manner, upon the folly and impiety of their conduct. We wonder at their proneness to idolatry, and at the difficulty with which they were withdrawn from so unreasonable an attachment; but equally unreasonable is our attachment to the world and its lying vanities, when the Lord Jesus offers himself as the Portion of his people; and, though not so evidently and palpably considered, is equally unprofitable to the interest and true happiness of our immortal nature. It is he alone that can satisfy the vast desires and powers of enjoyment of the soul; and in his love he offers and gives himself as the Portion of every returning and believing sinner.

That it is Jehovah Jesus who is here alluded to (Jer. x. 16), will be evident from the following consideration. The Eternal Jehovah, considered in himself, as an absolute God, in his divine essence, his eternal attributes, and infinite perfections, is incommunicable to sinful creatures; yea, for his perfections are all armed against them, and his attributes the object of dismay and terror. We can, indeed, form no proper ideas of his nature, which is altogether incomprehensible. The conception of

appropriating him in any view as our Portion, or of having any relation to him in the way of enjoyment, is entirely foreign from the heart of man; much less can we discern any ground of right to claim him as such. Hence arises the necessity of a Mediator, as the mean of communication between God and sinful creatures. This Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ—the God-man, Immanuel—who, as God, can approach near to God; as man, can come near to man; and, in the language of holy Job, “lay his hand upon them both.” In his Surety character we are united with, and become interested in, all things belonging to him, and whatever is connected with him. He, as God, possesses all the fulness of the Godhead, but possesses it in such a relation to manhood as to secure the enjoyment of it to believing sinners. Hence God becomes our God, manifested in Christ Jesus. Through him alone were made all the former manifestations of the Divine glory to ancient believers; and he, the God-man, and he alone, is still the full, the all-sufficient, and the eternal Portion of his people.

The nature of this Portion, or what the Lord Jesus Christ is to his people; what they find him now to be in the enjoyment of their hearts through faith, and what they shall find him for ever in the full vision of his glory; may well claim our serious attention and inquiry. He is, in one word, their all and in all. But the consideration of a few particulars, included in this boundless view, may tend to illustrate his excellency, to discover to the believer the glorious nature of his hopes, and to excite in his mind an holy indifference to earth, in the remembrance of his inheritance in the world unseen. We may,

1. Contemplate *the all-sufficiency of this Portion.*—When revealing himself to Abraham, he revealed himself under this very name; “I am God ALMIGHTY;” or rather, God ALL-SUFFICIENT. In his Divine nature he possesses an all-sufficiency of ability, power, and grace; and in his human nature, an all-sufficiency of kindness, tenderness, and sympathy to the wants and infirmities of his people. From both these considerations united, the

Apostle encourages the faith and hope of believers: “ We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God :—therefore let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, &c. : therefore let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.” (Heb. iv. 14—16.)

Man is seeking after happiness, and, in the eagerness of his mind in the important pursuit, he searches through all creation ; but there, alas ! he stops, in created and polluted good ; and therefore stops short of that which can satisfy his inquiry. He runs from country to country ; passes over the seas, or travels the land ; occupies his time and all his powers in the sordid pursuits of business ; applies his mind to the various subjects of study and contemplation, or in the constantly varying pursuits of pleasure ; continually changes his object and his hope, but is still as far as ever from his purposed end.

The world promises fair : the heart expands with expectation, and hope gives nerve to renewed exertions ; but, in the end, the lamentation of the once deluded king will force itself from the heart of every man, who, placing his happiness on earth, has followed, through all its varied paths, the phantom of earthly happiness : “ Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them ; I withheld not my heart from any joy ; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour ; and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do ; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” (Ecc. ii. 10, 11.) And “ what can the man do that cometh after the king ? even that which hath been already done ” (ver. 12) ; certainly no more. After the experience of successive ages, the next age makes the same attempts, and is compelled to bear the same testimony to the vanities of earth. In outward appearances, the world has by much the advantage of the church, and the sinner of the believer ; but the humble penitent, believing in Jesus, hath found a way to happiness of which others

are entirely ignorant, and a source of satisfaction where others are totally at a loss; and he who hath found Christ has found a Portion suited to the wants and to the nature of his soul, boundless in itself, and all-sufficient in its communications. That Jesus is my God and my Saviour, is enough to satisfy all the wishes and all the desires that a mind renewed and rectified by grace can form. The Apostle has summed up the whole in one comprehensive expression, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's:" for if all things are his, and if all fulness be in him, what can be wanting, to those whom he hath determined to bless, and delights to honour?

It is one of the most delightful views which we can take of the privileges of the believer, when we remember that all the attributes and perfections of the Divine Nature stand engaged in covenant promise, to exert themselves in promoting his spiritual and eternal welfare. Infinite Wisdom is his guide; Almighty Power is his preserver; Infinite Benevolence looks upon him with delight; Infinite Beneficence and Goodness are the fountain of his supply; yea, Infinite Mercy and Justice unite to effect his eternal salvation; and all that is in God, which is capable of communication to a creature, is by his promise, by covenant, and by oath. "I will be thy God," is the covenant engagement; where, then, shall we begin to enumerate the blessings which are bestowed upon his people, or where shall we end in recounting their infinite sum? They begin here with pardon of sin—of all sin—and free, complete justification from all guilt and condemnation; and they terminate only with everlasting glory,—a term which in itself includes an infinity of blessings which we can neither express nor conceive. They enclose, within those two vast points of pardon and glory, all grace to sanctify and purify the heart; all strength to overcome corruptions, sin, and enemies; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to guide and direct; all the gracious consolation of the Eternal Spirit under all afflictions, trials, and fears; all spiritual blessings in the unsearchable riches of grace; the present

prospect by faith, and the cheering hope, of the eternal presence and glory of the Lord Jesus. As he who is the Portion of Jacob is also the former of all things, and must therefore have all things at his disposal, he cannot want power, means, or sufficiency to supply whatever may be necessary for the benefit of his people; and, therefore, the promise of grace and glory is attended also with the promise of all good things—*i. e.* all which he sees good to bestow. Whatever he therefore denies, must be because he sees it good to deny them. For he cannot want the ability; and, surely, he who hath done so much, in his condescension to the cross, can never want the inclination to bestow whatever his infinite wisdom sees will promote their true felicity.

When inquiring, therefore, for solid good, where should we go but unto Him who hath the words of eternal life, and the power of eternal blessedness? To him I may come in all my cares and perplexities, to guide me by his wisdom, and to direct my way aright. To him I may come, in all my sorrows and afflictions, for peace and consolation, and for grace to turn them to my advantage and salvation. In all my losses he can abundantly supply and make up the deficiency: without him nothing earthly can satisfy the soul; but with his presence, and his favour, the loss of earthly good can never shake the security or affect the happiness of the believer: still he may say, with the Royal Psalmist, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance.”

Happy is the people that is in such a case! happy indeed is the people who have the Lord Jehovah for their God! The good old Patriarch Jacob had perhaps seen more of earthly evil than any of the Patriarchs, yet he could bear his testimony to the faithfulness and grace of the God in whom he had trusted, the God of his fathers, the Angel of the covenant, who had redeemed him from all evil; while he looked forward with holy joy, waiting for

the full salvation of the Lord. The unchangeable faithfulness of the Redeemer shall claim the same testimony from the heart of all his people, when, standing on the verge of the heavenly world, they view his dealings through this world, or look forward with the hope of all the glory which he hath prepared for them in that which is to come.

Our portion in this life is variable. What we possess we may be unable to enjoy; it may be placed in circumstances that will draw it from our participation; or we may be placed in a situation which may prevent our enjoyment; but Jesus is,

2. *An ever-present Portion, and always suitable to the enjoyment of faith.*—He is the Former of all things, and his presence fills heaven and earth. But “I will be with you always,”—“My presence shall go with you,”—are promises which imply much more than his general presence in and through all the works of his hand, and relate to a secret and indissoluble union which unites him with his people for their constant preservation and felicity. They are “one with him, and he with them;”—“he in them and they in him.” (John xvii. 23.) By which his constant presence and unceasing communication of blessings are secured to their souls. In his providence he is every where present; but in his mediatorial kingdom he is Head over all things to his church, which is his body; the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 22, 23.) As such, in a most especial sense there is no place where he is not; and where he is not for them, and for their good. They cannot be placed in a situation where he cannot see them, for no darkness can hide from him; yea, he is one with them: there is no place where their cry cannot reach him, and where they may not have recourse to him, and find him a present help. There is no circumstance in which he may not be beheld, received, and enjoyed; for there is not a situation in which his people have not enjoyed him, and triumphed in his love and care.

Thanks be to God, said the Apostle in multiplied afflictions, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ. (2 Cor. ii. 14.) We glory in tribulation; when, being jus-

tified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v. 1—5.) And though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast into the depth of the sea, faith can triumph in God our refuge and strength, a present help in the time of trouble. (Psa. xlvi. 1, 2, &c.; Hab. iii. 18.) When Moses was discouraged under the great burden of the Jewish people, the promise of the Lord's presence with him was his support and consolation: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Exod. xxxiii. 14.) In this presence also Israel rejoices; "The Lord his God is with him;" and therefore "the shout of a king is among them." (Num. xxiii. 21.) But is it still the same? has his church still reason to trust in the same promise of his grace? No doubt they have. The promise to Joshua is quoted by the Apostle, as a ground of similar encouragement to the church; and, by the same rule, every promise of the Old Testament may be applied to the New Testament church, and to New Testament believers. He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; therefore we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.) He is ever present in his almighty power, to defend us from danger; ever present with his infinite wisdom, to guide and direct us through difficulties and perplexities; ever present in his glory and love, to comfort in every affliction, to supply every loss, and support under every distress (2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 10); and ever present in his faithfulness and truth, to fulfil his promises. (Num. xxiii. 19, 20.) He will ever be found the faithful and the true Witness. (Rev. i. 5.) And, in the close of all his dispensations on earth, every believer shall bear the testimony of dying Joshua, having had the same promise to trust to; "Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath spoken," &c. (Josh. xxiii. 14.)

He is also,

3. *A constant and abiding Portion*—which, as it can never fail in itself, so it can never be lost, and of which his people shall never be deprived. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; but of what else can this

be said? certainly of nothing. Earthly possessions often remain only in the remembrance. Of riches it may be said, We had them, but they have made to themselves wings, and have flown away. Of pleasures it may be said, We enjoyed them, but they are past, as with the years before the flood. Of our dearest friends, which once enlivened the social circle, and in whose society we always found delight and profit, many perhaps are now no more. Our possessions are now perhaps only in remembrance, to embitter our present lot. In the late revolutionary struggle of the world, how many have thus lost their all; and are thus lamenting, Such and such riches, pleasures, friends, property, and possessions, were once mine; but now, alas! they are gone for ever! But so it never shall be said of Christ Jesus, the Portion of his people. Could we indeed enjoy to the utmost extent of our wishes, and drink to full satiety of the enjoyments of the world, still, in the most ample and gratifying possession of mere earthly objects, there is a thought which mars their enjoyment,—the thought of their instability and uncertainty: still they are destitute of that which alone can complete the happiness of possession, the confidence of their continuance. How painful would this idea be, if transferred to the possession of spiritual blessings! especially in connexion with our helplessness and unworthiness; our weakness and instability; and the power, malice, and artifice of our many surrounding enemies. From this consideration, some indeed would persuade us that an interest in Christ, our title to his favour, and our enjoyment of his blessings, are as liable to change as any of these transitory things of sense, because our weakness and instability are the same. But, blessed be God, we are taught otherwise: we know that where he hath begun a good work, he will carry it on; and that our security is not in ourselves, but in his all-sufficiency, faithfulness, and unchangable love. If this Portion always remains the same, his people also shall be kept to the enjoyment, by the almighty power of God through faith. (1 Pet. i. 5.) Not only, therefore, is the

Lord Jesus Christ, the Portion of his people, unperishing in his nature, and so unlike all besides ; but he gives himself to them in a perpetual covenant, never to be broken. The assurance of the believer's title, the confidence of faith, and the sweet enjoyment of his love, may perhaps be for a moment concealed or suspended ; but he hateth putting away ; he will not cast off for ever ; though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercy. The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but his loving-kindness shall not depart, nor the covenant of his peace be removed from his church. (Isa. liv. 8—10.) The ordinances of heaven may be removed, and depart from before him ; but his people shall never cease to be the nation of his love : and when the finite capacity of man can measure the heavens above, and search out the foundation of the earth beneath, and not before, will the Lord cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done. (Jer. xxxi. 35—37.) God hath given to his people eternal life in Christ Jesus ; and he who hath the Son of God, hath already the possession of that life, which shall never be taken from him. (1 John v. 11, 12.) The power, the promise, the love, and the faithfulness of Jehovah, are their security through all the varying dangerous scenes of time ; and, when flesh and heart fail, then shall believers know the full extent of their felicity, and the Lord Jesus shall become,

4. *Their everlasting Portion.*—The blessings of the believer prevail above all besides, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. Whatever may interrupt the present enjoyment by the way, can never affect the security of the title, nor the certainty of the possession. The heir, during his minority, is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed by the father. He may, therefore, be subjected to many privations and many inconveniences ; for his present supplies are regulated by the will of his father, as he may see suitable, or according to his capacity for use and enjoyment. In his pupilage state he may be at times under the displeasure of his father or his go-

vernors, who may see right to withhold what to him may appear desirable; but this will not affect his title to the inheritance, nor prevent his entering upon it fully in the due time. Till then, the parental wisdom and the parental arm are his guide and defence; and, when prepared for the enjoyment, the parental heart will delight to put him into possession. So, through all danger, affliction, and distress, the infinite wisdom and almighty power of Jehovah shall preserve his people; and when this life is closed, his infinite and unchangeable love shall delight to put them into the full possession of the inheritance of the saints in light. Now they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; and the messenger of death shall only come to fetch them home; to tell them that the appointed time is come, and that now the glorious possession is their own for ever. What a glorious prospect does the Apostle set before us, in describing the inheritance itself! “I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new, &c. He that overcometh shall inherit all things,” &c. (Rev. xxi. 3—7.) “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it,” &c. (ver. 23—27.) This is that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; the inheritance which is in fact God himself, the everlasting enjoyment of all that is in him, through the God-man, Christ Jesus. And, indeed, the heirs of God will never be satisfied with any thing short of the full enjoyment of God throughout eternity.

What a glorious view does this present to us of the person and the blessings of the Lord our Redeemer! While all blessings are in him, through him they are promised as the portion of his people: secured in him, he himself secures them for their enjoyment; and his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

But perhaps, while contemplating these glories, in the consideration of our own unworthiness we may be ready to question whether these blessings can ever become ours. It is true, indeed, we have forfeited our right and title to our natural inheritance by sin, and much more are we unworthy of the inheritance of glory. But the inheritance itself is the sovereign gift of grace. We are not directed to look for encouragement, to ourselves, or from our own deservings, but to the covenant, the gift, the promise, and the word of God. His strict judgment would be justified in our condemnation, but his free and sovereign grace is the source of our hope, and will glorify itself in the salvation of all his people. His covenant promise is the unconditional engagement of his own grace to bestow the blessings of salvation: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people:—I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi. 31—34.) "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," is the free purpose of his eternal mind, and the inalienable grant of his sovereign grace. He who hath given himself for us, will as freely give himself to us, in all the fulness of his blessings. What then can I want, if he be mine? While we wonder at and admire the grace which led him to place himself in a situation and relation, in which he might be suitable to the enjoyment of creatures, we must admire the nature of that portion which he hath thus provided for his people. Not only pardon, righteousness, grace, and all spiritual blessings, but himself, in all the glories of his mediatorial person, and all the fulness of his mediatorial grace. This is the glory which eye hath not

seen, nor ear heard, and which it could never enter into the heart of man to conceive: the Portion which nothing but Sovereign Grace could devise, and which nothing but Almighty Power could bestow.

But if the blessing be a sovereign gift of grace, on whom will he bestow it? who are the happy people who may expect its enjoyment? All who are willing to receive it in the way of his own appointment, or who wait to receive it in the exercise of faith; for to as many as thus receive him, to them giveth he power, or privilege, to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name. When he who gives the privilege, gives the faith to behold, to admire, and to receive it; his promises secure to faith the full and the everlasting enjoyment. This indeed is the only way in which any sinner can hope for the enjoyment, and the way which God has appointed to communicate all its fulness. Sensible of my guilt, and total unworthiness, but fully sensible of my need, I approach the Throne of Grace; I lay hold of the covenant of redemption; and look by faith to the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Advocate of guilty sinners. I see every blessing originating in the sovereign purposes of grace, and secured by the blood of atonement, in a way suited and honourable to the Divine attributes and perfections. I see and embrace the promise of his word, in which that grace is displayed; and trusting in it, as the word of that God which cannot lie, here I rest in the dependence of faith: and in doing this, I am confident that this faith cannot fail me, because I have the security of God's faithfulness to fulfil all its expectation. Hence he who hath granted himself as the Portion of his people, by an act of sovereign grace, when yet afar off, and alienated from him, becomes their Portion by the choice of their own minds. Let me, says the believer, be found in Christ, &c.: yea, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Whatever the world can offer, I esteem but loss, and dross, and dung, in comparison of the knowledge of my Saviour. What God

bestows with Christ Jesus, I will receive with thankfulness; but this is not my portion, nor my inheritance. Let all my lusts and passions yield to the dominion of my Lord; how far beneath his presence, his favour, and his love, is the enjoyment of them all. His glory, his beauty, his suitableness, are infinitely beyond all. It is this view which deadens the affections to the world, crucifies the flesh and the world, and elevates the hope and ardour of the believer. While worldly men are inquiring “who will shew us any good,” Lord lift thou up, says the believing soul, the light of thy countenance upon me: this shall put gladness in my heart, &c. “Whom have I in heaven but Thee?” &c.

Wilt thou then have Christ as thy Portion? Seek Him in the prayer of faith, and it shall be unto thee according to the desires of faith. But let not the deluded sinner, under the sound of the Gospel, and in the view of all its blessings, take up his portion upon earth. The Gospel offers Jesus freely with all his blessings; and if he be not yours, it will be found to have arisen from your own ungrateful rejection of his grace. You have perhaps seen no excellency in him why you should desire him; there is nothing in all the glory of his person, or of his salvation, suited to your corrupted and depraved nature:—and what have you taken in his stead? A portion amidst the perishable things of life, which, in the fullest enjoyment of them, can never satisfy, and which will soon pass away for ever! And what portion will then remain to you? By the vanity of all besides, by the riches and fulness of those blessings, and by the willingness of the Redeemer to bestow them, be persuaded then to receive him in his great salvation. It is recorded of the tribe of Levi, that Moses gave no inheritance unto them, because the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them. (Jos. xiii. 33.) It is impossible to have the heart in the world, and at the same time in the things of God; and, in many cases, the enjoyment of the one is incompatible with the enjoyment of the other. But what though we are denied some

earthly blessings, if we have the love of Christ here, and the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter? Whatever, therefore, hinders his favour, or stands between us and him, let us freely part with all, and willingly say, "None but Christ." For if God in Christ give himself to us, and give us a heart to enjoy him, what further can we want, what more can we enjoy, in time or through eternity!

Here let the believer encourage the exercise and the confidence of his faith. In every circumstance, and in every situation, his all-sufficiency can admit no defect, his promise and his faithfulness can never fail. It is true, in the present state, these things are rather the objects of faith than the subjects of enjoyment: and, indeed, all the present enjoyment is received by faith. Many things may now interrupt the felicity, becloud the hope, and discourage the expectation of the believer. Trials, difficulties, afflictions, and wants, often distress the mind, while, by the delay of Divine blessings, or the hiding of a Father's love, the believer is ready to fear his faith and hope are vain. But let it be remembered, that while here, a Father's wisdom communicates his tokens of favour as he sees best; and that he hath said, *As thy days, so thy strength shall be.* (See Deut. xxxiii. 25—29.) Let us, therefore, through life, wait upon him, and trust in him, and so glorify him by believing. We may expect strength for trials as they come, though not before; and grace for the day, as the day requires it. Here we must be contented to live by faith, and to walk by faith. Day by day we must feel our need; day by day we must come in the application of faith; and day by day he will supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He may try our faith, but will not deceive it; it shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if the Lord be the Portion of our souls, we may confidently trust in him. (Lam. iii. 24.) Soon faith shall be turned into sight, and hope into full enjoyment; and then

shall the believer be brought to the full possession of his glorious Portion. Now, then, let him take up the language of the Psalmist, "The Lord is the Portion of mine inheritance, and my cup," &c. "Thou wilt therefore shew me the path of life, where, in thy presence, is the fulness of joy, and where, at thy right hand, there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. xvi. 5—11.)

END OF VOLUME IV.

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